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Employability Resources Network

The Employability Resources Network (ERN) is a three-year demonstration project funded by Employment and Immigration Canada under the Innovations program.

ERN is the responsibility of three organizations: The Canadian Council on Social Development, The Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group, and The Norton Group.

ERN's purpose is to explore and evaluate methods for helping unemployed people get off social assistance and back into the job market, through employability programs currently under way across Canada.

ERN will select at least 10 to 15 demonstration projects for an in-depth evaluation of the different approaches used to help social assistance recipients and others re-enter the labour force. It will assess the projects' effectiveness for different groups, such as older unemployed workers, women, native people, disabled persons, visible minorities and youth.

ERN will establish a standardized framework for evaluating employability enhancement projects. The framework will provide useful information not only for government policy-makers, but also for business, social service and employment agencies, and program administrators.

ERN will develop an information resource centre. It will include an inventory of national and international employment projects, an evaluation data base and a documentation library. A communications network will serve organizations and individuals in the employment enhancement field.

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Ressources pour l'amélioration des possibilités d'emploi

Le projet Ressources pour l'amélioration des possibilités d'emploi (RAMPE) est un projet témoin d'une durée de trois ans financé par Emploi et Immigration Canada dans le cadre du programme Innovations.

Trois organisations assument la responsabilité de RAMPE : le Conseil canadien de Développement social, Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group et Le Norton Group.

Le mandat de RAMPE est d'explorer et d'évaluer, dans le cadre de programmes d'amélioration des possibilités d'emploi ayant cours dans l'ensemble du Canada, différentes formules pouvant aider les chômeurs à se soustraire à l'aide sociale et à réintégrer le marché du travail.

RAMPE sélectionnera dix à quinze projets témoins pour évaluer minutieusement les différentes stratégies favorisant la réinsertion des assistés sociaux et d'autres personnes sur le marché du travail. Il

appréciera l'efficacité des projets visant différents groupes tels que les chômeurs d'un certain âge, les femmes, les autochtones, les handicapés, les minorités visibles et les jeunes.

RAMPE élaborera un schéma d'évaluation destiné aux projets d'amélioration des débouchés. Ce schéma fournira des renseignements utiles non seulement aux décideurs politiques du gouvernement, mais aussi aux entreprises, aux organismes de services sociaux et d'emploi, et aux administrateurs de programmes.

RAMPE créera également un centre national de documentation. Celui-ci comprendra l'inventaire des programmes d'amélioration des perspectives d'emploi mis en place au Canada et à l'étranger, une base de données sur l'évaluation et un centre de documentation. Un réseau de communication sera à la disposition des organismes et des particuliers qui s'occupent de l'amélioration des perspectives d'emploi.

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FINAL REPORT
EVALUATION STUDY OF THE
PEEL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
(ES) PROGRAMS

November, 1989

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Employability Resources Network (ERN) Initiative an evaluation study was conducted on the Employment Services (ES) Programs located in the Regional Municipality of Peel, Ontario. The study focused on eight major issues. In Exhibit 1 these eight issues are presented and the overall conclusion to each issue is summarized. In the main body of the executive summary we outline in greater detail the conclusions reached in this evaluation. The final part of the summary is Exhibit 2 which presents our understanding, based on the findings and conclusions in the report, of "what works for whom?". This is the key question which all ERN evaluations are designed to answer. In the case of the ES evaluation "whom" focused on the sole support women that made up the balance of P1000 program participants.

- ES Programming is successful in improving the ability of P1000 participants (sole support women) to obtain employment. Over 70% of P1000 participants and ES participants as a whole found work at some point after an involvement in ES.

However, we found that participants were less successful in maintaining employment, because approximately

half the participants were employed at the time the survey questionnaire was administered, but a proportionally much higher number of individuals in the comparison group were employed (84%). In addition, most participants held their first job following participation in ES for a period of between 2 and 7 months.

We noted that the average length of employment among participants was in close proximity to the UI eligibility level. We did not have data available to identify a statistical relationship between individuals leaving employment for the purpose of receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

- ES Programming made participants more employment ready. A primary reason for this is that the ability of participants to deal with their leading barrier to employability (taking care of family matters) was improved primarily as a result of the group/individual counselling provided by the program.

In general, participants considered all their skills to have been improved.

Notwithstanding this improvement participants had less work experience than the population at large and, as a result, were less confident about their working abilities.

We also concluded that the emphasis in the program on encouraging educational upgrading may result in participants taking "casual" employment which would reduce their ability to maintain employment.

Overall, the emphasis on educational upgrading, and participants' lack of work experience and confidence are primary reasons explaining why participants have less success maintaining employment following their participation in the ES program.

- Participant's financial situations improved significantly following participation in ES because they found jobs.

We concluded that participants' job related income was higher than what might have been gained from a reliance on social assistance. In other words, financial betterment (as one might anticipate) tended to be related to the ability to obtain a higher job-related income. Financial loss was related to a dependence on social assistance.

- Dependence on social assistance declined following ES participation. The research from previous issues shows that improvements in participants' abilities to obtain

employment is translated to higher levels of employment and, therefore, less reliance on social assistance.

In the six months prior to ES completion 81% of participants reported they received assistance compared to 59% six months afterwards. In principle 100% of participants should have reported they were on social assistance prior to ES participation since all participants are referred to ES by social assistance officials.

- Social assistance savings that can be attributed to ES programming are estimated at approximately \$2.1 million per year. These savings exceed the cost of running those parts of the program that were evaluated.

Taking into account the information gained from previous issues we conclude that the savings are due to the improved employment situation of participants following their involvement in ES.

- In general, respondents found the individual components of the ES programs to be helpful. No single component decisively outscored the others, with the possible exception that work experience was particularly valuable in the Youth Prospects program. We conclude that multiple service delivery was probably valuable in the freedom of choice that it could provide to program administrators. However, we found that very few individuals (approximately 5%) were

Exhibit 1

Evaluation Issues and Summarized Conclusions

Issues	Summarized Conclusions
• Did the programs assist the participants in obtaining employment; or maintaining employment?	Obtaining employment: successful. Maintaining employment: less successful
• Did programs strengthen the participants' personal sense of employment readiness (or self worth)?	Yes
• Did the programs improve the participants' financial situation? (Issue 4)	Yes, related to increased employment
• Did the programs end or reduce the participants' dependence on social assistance? (Issue 2)	Reduced due to their improved employment situation
• What were the costs of the programs compared to social assistance? (Issue 15)	8 months social assistance savings equal one year of program costs
• What elements of the programs contribute most to success? (Issue 12, Elements Strengthened)	All components helpful but, no evidence multiple programs improve results
• Were training skills useful? (Issue 5, Secondary)	Job experience and in-class training need to reinforce each other
• Were targets achieved? (Issue 10, Secondary)	No targets



WHAT WORKS FOR WHOM FEMALE SOLE SUPPORT PARENTS

Exhibit 2

Intervention	Expected Output	Output	Impact	Effect	Comments
Academic Upgrading (some emphasis on this in the program)	enhanced knowledge and general work and learning skills	participants recognize importance of education, however, there is a short term education bias to program. A previous evaluation showed that employers of "entry level" jobs are less concerned about education qualifications.	participants are concerned with updating their education and in the short term focus on employment in "casual jobs".	reduced chance of success in maintaining employment	

* The results of our research did not permit us to comment on other components of the P1000 program which was designed to enhance the employability of sole support parents.

WHAT WORKS FOR WHOM FEMALE SOLE SUPPORT PARENTS

Exhibit 2

Intervention	Expected Output	Output	Impact	Effect	Comments
Job Search Training	participants have same ability as population to obtain work	participants have greater advantage than population in filling out job application forms, dressing appropriately - skills necessary to obtain work.	participants better able to present themselves to employers providing "entry level jobs"	participants are successful in obtaining work	70% were employed after leaving ES compared to before
Work Placements Vocational Counselling	a "judicious" mix between enhancement of work experience and job skills to a level that would allow employment to be obtained and maintained	program enhances work experience and job skills, but not up to the same level as the population.	participants with less work experience and confidence are less able to maintain their position in the job market. Continued efforts to gain experience will improve this situation.	participants are moderately successful maintaining employment	fewer participants were <u>currently</u> employed compared to a comparison group. The first job after EST participation lasted 2-7 months

involved in multiple programs. This seems to contradict assertions by ES program staff that the multiple-program approach is an important service delivery feature of ES, because the large majority of participants do not receive any benefits from access to different programs. Generally we conclude that the evidence concerning the advantages of multiple service delivery in ES is weak.

- In terms of training skills, interviews with ES staff indicated that on-the-job experience was particularly valuable. This experience probably needs to be coupled with classroom training. We concluded that both experience and in-class training need to reinforce each other in the enhancement of employability.

- It was not possible to reach a conclusion concerning the achievement of targets by ES because the concept of targets was not appropriate to the programming as it is now structured. For example, the clinical or counselling orientation of the programming is commendable in terms of the quality of interaction that occurs with clients. However, its orientation conflicts with the quantifiable measurement of program results. Without these results it is not possible to define targets. The measurement of results is important for management and accountability purposes.

WHAT WORKS FOR WHOM
FEMALE SOLE SUPPORT PARENTS

Intervention	Expected Output	Output	Impact	Effect	Comments
Job Search Training	participants have same ability as population to obtain work	participants have greater advantage than population in filling out job application forms, dressing appropriately - skills necessary to obtain work.	participants better able to present themselves to employers providing "entry level jobs"	participants are successful in obtaining work	70% were employed after leaving ES compared to before
Work Placements Vocational Counselling	a "judicious" mix between enhancement of work experience and job skills to a level that would allow employment to be obtained and maintained	program enhances work experience and job skills, but not up to the same level as the population.	participants with less work experience and confidence are less able to maintain their position in the job market. Continued efforts to gain experience will improve this situation.	participants are moderately successful maintaining employment	fewer participants were <u>currently</u> employed compared to a comparison group. The first job after EST participation lasted 2-7 months

1. INTRODUCTION

Employment Services (ES) is located in the Regional Municipality of Peel, Ontario. ES programs are designed to work in concert with existing services. The objective of the ES programs are to assist unemployed Peel residents to:

- enhance their employability;
- obtain and maintain employment; and
- cope with the effects and stresses of employment and unemployment

Three primary programs and two secondary programs have been operated by ES. These programs collectively deal with approximately 800 to 1,000 referred social assistance clients per year.

Purpose of the Study

An Evaluation Assessment of the Employment Services (ES) in the Regional Municipality of Peel was completed in May 1989. This laid the groundwork for the conduct for a subsequent Evaluation Study, which was completed in November 1989.

The ES Assessment and Evaluation studies were completed as part of a series of evaluations being conducted

under the Employability Resources Network (ERN) Initiative.

The overall purpose of an ERN evaluation is to determine:

- the success of selected employability enhancement programs in helping welfare recipients become more employable;
- the relative costs and benefits of such demonstration projects; and
- alternative means of project delivery.

Evaluation Objectives

The primary objective of this study has been to investigate, using a multiple lines of evidence approach, issues which have a direct bearing on the information requirements and goals of the ERN initiative. The results of the study will be used as input to the development of an information base which can be used to determine how best to deliver employability programs to social assistance recipients (SAR's). This will aid officials in Employment and Immigration Canada and programs across Canada in making effective decisions to

improve possibilities for employability enhancement among SAR's.

The research objectives of this study are focused on the analysis of a set of core issues developed for ERN evaluations. Two secondary issues have been investigated in this study which are related to the characteristics of ES that make it unique from other employability enhancement organizations or programs being studied under ERN.

Because of the refinement of the ERN core issues during the course of this project, the statement of issues in this study is slightly modified as compared to the issues as originally framed in the Assessment report.

In total, 8 issues were considered, which are outlined in Exhibit 3. The exhibit also reveals for each issue the quality of the data and the results that were expected from the study. Brackets refer to the issue numbers used in the Evaluation Assessment report.

The Associated Evaluation Enhancement Project

In parallel to the research conducted for this evaluation study, an enhancement of the ES client information data base was completed. This involved the following two main activities:

- designing and implementing a new computer system for data entry of registration/assessment information

and follow-up information on participants; and

- installation of an SPSS system at the ES offices.

The enhanced database was used for evaluation research purposes and it was consolidated into summary form to report grouped results.

Structure of the Report

This report is structured in the following manner:

- **Background:** Sets out the objectives of the ERN initiatives and the benefits of this initiative;
- **Study Design:** Describes how the data for the evaluation study research was collected and analyzed;
- **Facts, Findings and Conclusions:** Outlines for each evaluation issue the key facts, findings and conclusions;
- **Recommendations:** Outlines recommendations based on the conclusions for each issue; and
- **Conclusion:** Provides a summary comment for the report.

Exhibit 3: Core Research Issues

Issues	Coverage of Issues by Data Sources
1. Did the programs assist the participants in obtaining employment or maintaining employment (Assessment Issue 1)	High
2. Did the programs strengthen the participants' personal sense of employment readiness (or self worth)? (Assessment Issue 3)	Medium
3. Did the programs improve the participants' financial situation? (Assessment Issue 4)	Low
4. Did the programs end or reduce the participants' dependence on social assistance (Assessment Issue 2)	Medium
5. What were the costs of the programs compared to social assistance? (Assessment Issue 15)	Medium
6. Which elements of the programs contribute most to success? (Assessment Issue 12)	Low
7. Were training skills useful? (Assessment Issue 5, Secondary)	Low
8. Were targets achieved? (Assessment Issue 10, Secondary)	Medium

Acknowledgements

In conducting this evaluation study we gratefully acknowledge the considerable support and input provided by officials of ES, particularly Debra Cohen, Manager, Employment Services,

Department of Social Services and Suzanne Mills, Acting Manager and ES North Office Coordinator. ES staff were helpful in making information available to us, in assisting us with implementing the database enhancement, and even more so, in assisting us in dealing with and resolving any difficulties that arose in the course of our study. We also wish to acknowledge the contribution of Barry Ezrin, who conducted the follow-up focus groups that were valuable in helping to interpret the meaning the survey results.

2. BACKGROUND

Mission Statement of Employability Resources Network (ERN)

The Employability Resources Network (ERN) has undertaken to identify and promote effective ways of helping employment disadvantaged persons return to active participation in the labour market.

Objectives of ERN

The objectives of ERN are the following:

- To determine through a comprehensive evaluation of a variety of initiatives designed to enhance the employability of disadvantaged workers, which approaches work best for whom.
- To demonstrate and test, using financial and technical assistance, approaches that are vital to enhance the employability of disadvantaged workers.
- To develop and maintain a central information clearinghouse of employability enhancement techniques

and materials. Contained in the clearinghouse are descriptions of Canadian and international projects and programs, contact people, evaluations and bibliographies.

- To synthesize recent experience and recommend to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (funder) and other governments effective approaches for enhancing the employability of disadvantaged workers.

Benefits of ERN

ERN has been designed to provide a "return" in the form of information and assistance to key stakeholders. They include Employment and Immigration Canada, other labour market or social service departments, programs being evaluated and demonstration programs, as well as communities, groups and individuals working or interested in the training and human resource development areas.

- Programs being evaluated will benefit from the objective examination of their services and outcomes for participants. Where appropriate,

suggestions for alternate approaches or changes will be made.

- Senior governments will receive a synthesis of findings from evaluations, literature review and contacts with the employment community that will help in policy formulation and program development.
- Interested parties will also have access to a national clearinghouse of information on employment programs, programs, contact persons, evaluations that will help in preparing funding submissions and in improving the quality of their services.
- Selected demonstration programs will be assisted to test innovative approaches.

Overview of the ES Programs

The intent of Peel ES is to offer a range or continuum of programming options to:

- assist employable social assistance recipients to become more job ready; and
- to assist the job ready in finding suitable employment. The definition of "suitable" employment varies. It depends largely on both provincial legislative provisions or allowances, and Peel Region expectations for employables.

The primary programs involved in ES (which were the main focus of this evaluation), all of which are funded in part through the province of Ontario programs, are:

- **Project 1000**, funded primarily through the Employment Support Initiative (ESI) of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), Employment Opportunities Program (EOP) is directed to sole support parents receiving social assistance. The vast majority of ES participants are female. This is a 4-10 week pre-employment program that encourages women to continue school. The time spent in the program involves approximately 4 weeks of counselling and career planning, and a 6 week work placement or academic upgrading component.
- **Youth Prospects**, funded through two Ministries - the FUTURES Program of the Ontario Ministry of Skills Development and the Youth Employment Preparation Program of MCSS, is directed at work skills development for social assistance recipients between the ages of 16 and 24.
- **Employment Resource Service**, funded through the Employment Opportunities Program of MCSS, is directed at helping any job ready social assistance recipient find employment, by using a staff of 'job developers' who look for employment opportunities and employers.

ES also acts as a coordinator, primary focal point or delivery agent for two smaller provincially administered programs, (which were not evaluated):

- **The Vocational Rehabilitation Job Placement Program**, is directed at arranging suitable assessment, training and work placements for the employable disabled.
- **The Social Service Employment Program (SSEP)**, is directed at social agency work placements for job ready social assistance recipients (primarily sole support parents and the disabled).

As well as the above, a short-term program, - **the Case Aide Training Program** - funded by Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (funds from CJS Job Development/Severely Employment Disadvantaged program) has recently concluded.

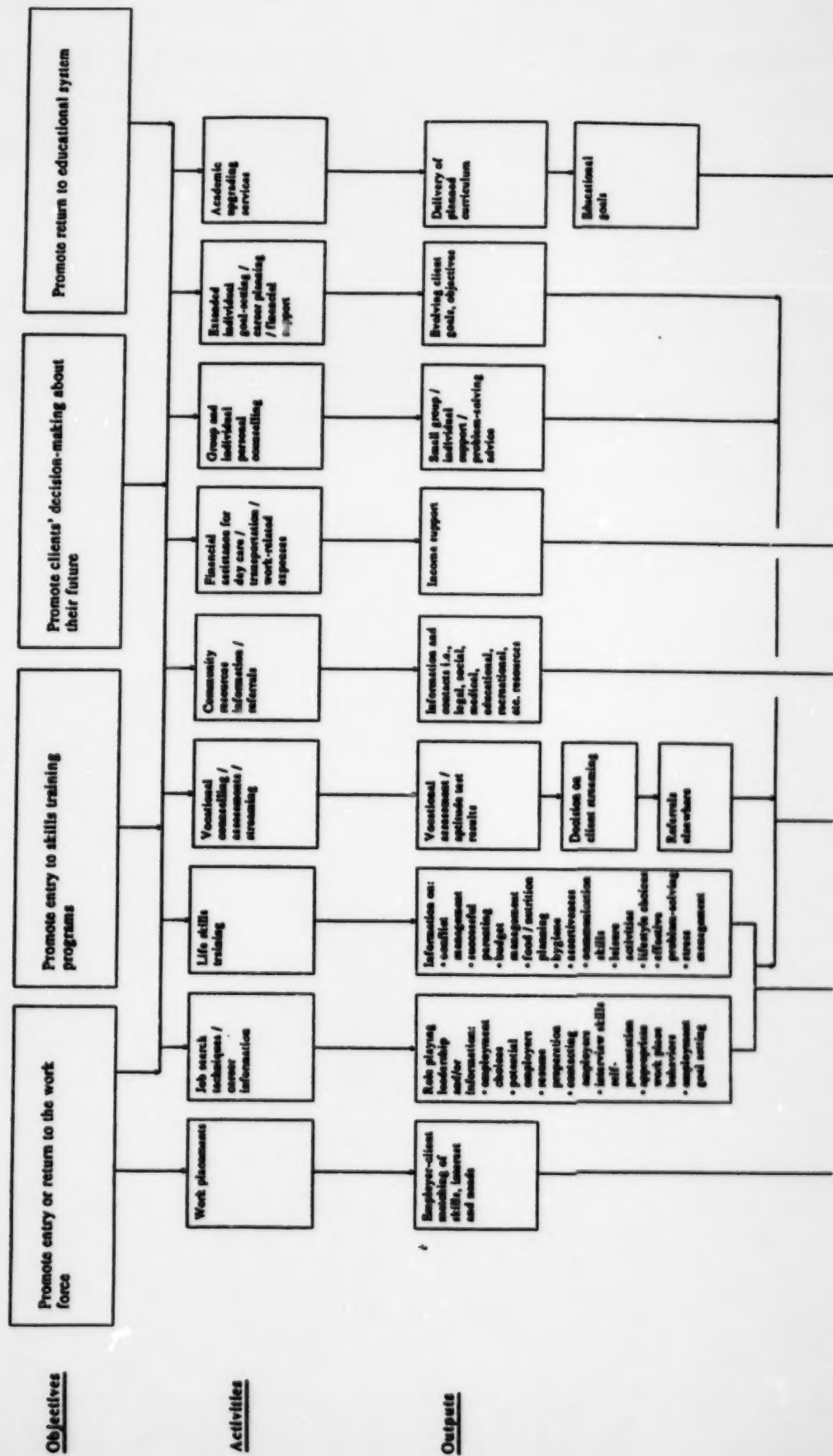
The total budget for the ES programs in 1988/89 was approximately \$1.2 million for the programs that were evaluated.

Total approved person-years for ES were 23, split between two District offices, one in Brampton and one in Mississauga (ES North and South, respectively).

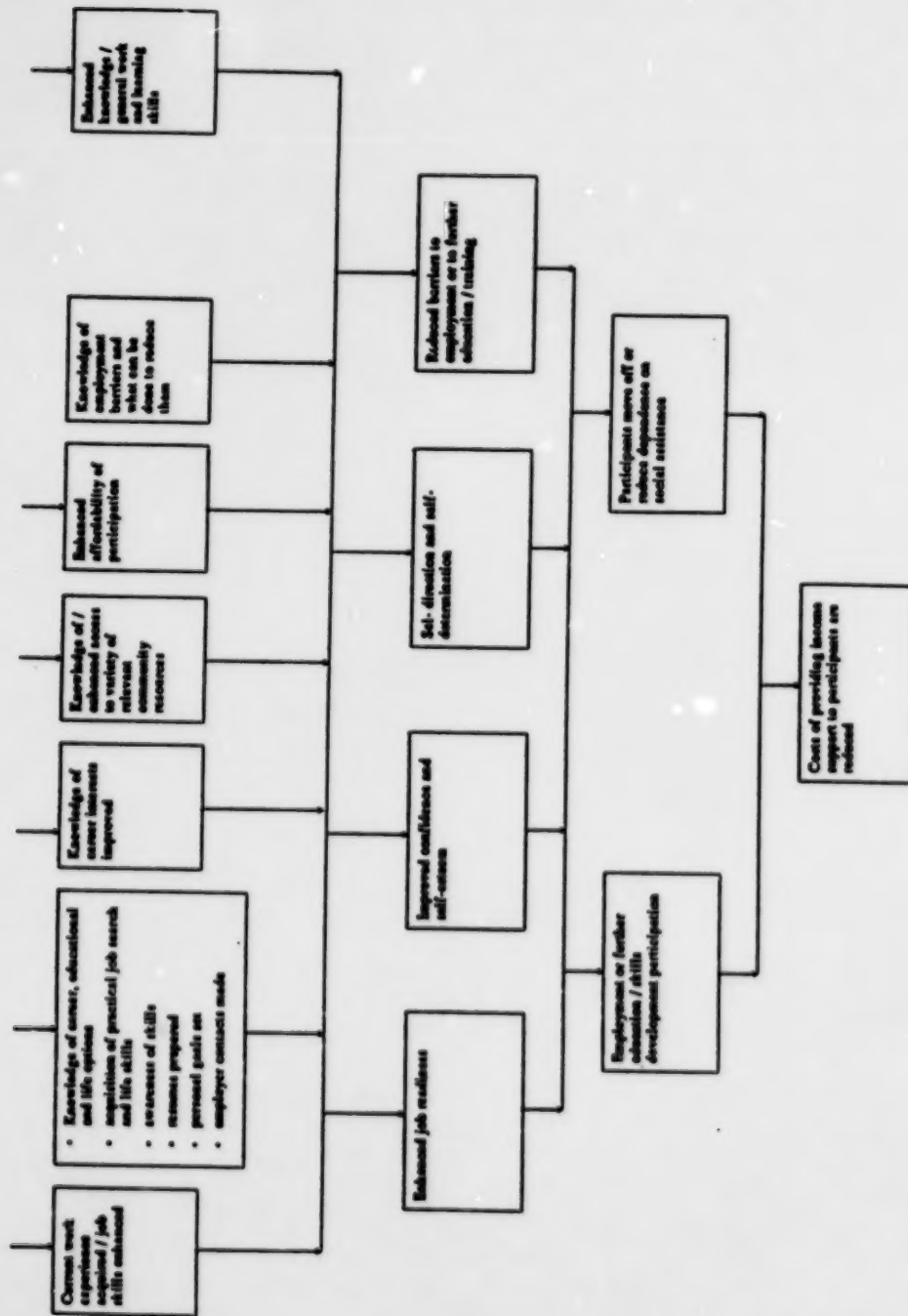
Reporting to the Manager of ES were two supervisors, one for each District Office, and a control clerk.

In developing the findings, conclusions and recommendations for this report the primary focus of our research was on the effects of the P1000 program relative to the other programs in ES. The logic model for P1000 in Exhibit 4 (developed during the Evaluation Assessment of ES) shows the expected impacts and effects flowing from each intervention in the program. From the perspective of ERN, the objective of evaluations of employability enhancement programs is to assess this "flow" to determine "what works for whom?". Appendix I provides the logic diagrams for each of the programs which make up ES.

Exhibit 4 : EST — Project 1000 Program Logic Model



Impacts and Effects



3.

STUDY DESIGN

The evaluation study design we utilized was based on a multiple lines of evidence approach which is intended to maximize the coverage of evaluation issues by employing different research methodologies. In conducting our research we used the following methodologies:

- retrieval of information from the ES evaluation database;
- separate telephone surveys of ES program participants and a comparison group;
- interviews of ES program and government officials; and
- conduct of a focus group with ES program participants.

Use of the Evaluation Database

ES has, in the past, collected information on participants of its component programs through the use of an assessment form, completed upon initial contact with ES by an individual, and a follow-up form, which was completed later. Through the project enhancement mentioned earlier, the data on these forms was formatted into an SPSS

readable format, which we were able to access for our evaluation purpose. In the course of conducting our research we discovered limitations in the computer data that was available. In many data fields within the database, there were a very large number of missing values. When the database was useable it provided the definitive answer to a question that only a census can provide. In Appendix II a demographic overview of the participants is provided. The greatest weakness of the database is the fact that some of the most interesting information about follow-up contact with participants is only recently being compiled for current and future groups of participants. This follow-up information (if successfully compiled on an as-you-go basis) will be of research and evaluation interest only after meaningful amounts of data have accumulated in the future.

Telephone Surveys

The purpose of the telephone survey of ES participants was to establish a "snapshot" view of participants in terms of subjects such as success of ES programming in improving their various skills, work history, income, social assistance and socio-demographic

characteristics. This survey provided the major source of data for this evaluation.

Some items of information about the ES participants was collected from the ES Evaluation data base (discussed previously). Comparing the characteristics of the survey data to the overall evaluation base, the telephone survey did under represent male ES participants. The data base identifies 24% of the total participant population as male whereas only 9% of the survey respondents interviewed were male. However, with respect to marital status the survey results were similar to the population results. Given the nature of realistic data collection options, the survey was the only feasible approach for the collection of detailed information representative of the general experiences of the participant population.

A second telephone survey was conducted on a comparison group of non-participants who were intended to face similar socio-economic circumstances as the participants. They were chosen at random from areas as close as possible to places where participants resided. The similarity of participants with the comparison group was based on geography since this was the only practical way of sampling a population facing a comparable job and housing market.

It would have been ideal as a scientific method to have a comparison group that would consist of social assistance recipients eligible for ES assistance, but who were randomly routed away from

ES programming into a control group. For practical and ethical reasons, this could not be done. The next best alternative was to study persons who were in some key manner similar to participants.

The comparison telephone survey group was found to be somewhat more highly educated, and to be more male than the participant sample. Statistical methods were used to attempt to control (or "net-out") the influence of certain other factors that might make the comparison group different from the participants. At certain points, the statistical analysis sought to compensate for differences in education and the male/female ratio when comparing the two groups.

Within certain limits the comparison group does provide a background yardstick that can be used to assess the progress of the ES program participants. Comparison group individuals faced the same state of the economy, and the same regional environment as ES participants.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with officials of ES, as well as with personnel from the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the office of the Commissioner of Social Services for the Peel Region.

Appendix III lists all the individuals interviewed during the course of this evaluation study.

Focus Group

A focus group was conducted by ERN in order to help interpret some results from other lines of evidence. This approach made it possible to explore in more depth with participants their intent and the context of responses that were obtained by other methods.

In general, focus group results were considered to have the greatest weight when drawing evaluation conclusions. This was particularly the case when considering unclear results obtained by the telephone survey as compared to differing interpretations obtained in the focus group setting. This pragmatic weighting of different data sources in the evaluation was followed by ERN because the interaction of the focus group setting made it possible to probe responses to some questions that are inherently difficult to pose with a survey instrument. In this manner, the evaluation reduced the interpretation uncertainty that results from analyzing unclear responses, such as those that occur due to possible respondent misinterpretation of a formal survey question, or where respondents might have wished to amplify upon or explain their answers. Such uncertainty typically happens when a questionnaire offers accurate "closed ended" response categories, which some respondents may have felt did not fully communicate their feelings on a topic important to them.

The focus group was particularly revealing concerning respondents' attitudes about the barriers to employment that they faced. The focus group was also helpful in better understanding participants' past experience with social assistance.

Information on ES Programs

Conduct of the Evaluation Assessment of ES involved the review of materials on its administration and the structure of its programs. This information proved useful for some of the data requirements of the research questions in this evaluation study.

The evaluation assessment resulted in the identification of a broad range of issues which could be researched in a subsequent evaluation study. From these issues eight were isolated, six of which covered the core issues directly relevant to the ERN initiative. The remaining two secondary issues focused on some of the features of ES which made it unique from other employability enhancement organizations or programs being evaluated in the ERN initiative.

The next section of this study details the facts and findings arising from the research on each of the eight evaluation study issues.



4.

FACTS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this section for each of the issues detailed in Exhibit 3 we outline the principal facts and findings.

Did the programs assist the participants in obtaining employment or maintaining employment?

CONCLUSION

ES Programming is successful in improving the ability of P1000 participants (sole support women) to obtain employment. Over 70% of P1000 participants and ES participants, as a whole, found work at some point after an involvement in ES.

However, we found that participants were less successful in maintaining employment, because approximately half were employed at the time the survey questionnaire was administered, but a proportionally much higher number of individuals in the comparison group were employed (84%). In addition, most participants held their first job following their participation in ES for a period of between 2 and 7 months.

We noted that the average length of employment among participants was in close proximity to the UI eligibility level. We did not have data available to identify a statistical relationship between individuals leaving employment for the purpose of receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

ISSUE FOCUS

In carrying out our research we used the telephone survey as the primary source of information about the employment situation of ES participants before and after the program. The intention was to determine whether the employment prospects of the average participant improved following an ES involvement.

It was not possible to state results about the employment history of individuals for specific time periods (e.g. 1,3, and 6 months) before and after participation in ES programming (which was the wording of the evaluation issue stated in the evaluation assessment). The limitations in the quantity and quality of the data in the ES database meant that it was necessary to rely on survey data. Obtaining full details on the original issue would have created an excessive response burden for respondents.

FINDINGS

In total, 70% of P1000 participants and ES participants surveyed found work at some point during the period between their completion of ES programming and the date the telephone survey was conducted. This finding reveals that a large number of participants were able to obtain employment following ES participation, but it does not provide an indication concerning their ability to sustain this employment.

At the time we administered our surveys we noted that a lower percentage of participants (47% of all ES participants and 38% of P1000 participants) were currently employed compared to a comparison group (84% of persons were currently employed).

The relatively low current employment levels experienced by ES participants is contrary to the general employment situation in the Region of Peel. It is one of the fastest growing areas in Ontario, with a ten-year growth pattern about six times the provincial average, and presently has a low unemployment rate.

We recognized that the reason for the low current employment levels are due to the more limited ability demonstrated by ES and P1000 participants to maintain employment. We discovered that the percentage of time employed in the twelve months before programming participation was 13% for all participants. This means that, on average, these persons were working

13% of the total number of person-hours that they could have been employed during this period. Following ES participation (which is of different duration for each person), the percentage of time employed was 43%. In effect participants in ES were on average employed over a longer period of time after programming involvement than before. However, this improvement did not reach a level of full employment whereby each individual was fully integrated into the job market.

In addition to the above, we determined that before ES, 54% of those who were employed had full time jobs. After ES, of those who held jobs, 76% of the jobs were full time.

We found that 60% of all ES participants surveyed held one job, 30% held two jobs, and 10% held more than two jobs. Similarly, 90% of P1000 participants held between 1 and 2 jobs.

Regarding the first job held after the program, about 57% of the participants held the job for a duration in the two to seven month range. About one-quarter of these first jobs lasted more than 7 months. In addition, the average length of employment was 18 weeks.

It is interesting to note the similarity between the average length of employment and the maximum number of insurable weeks currently required to qualify for UI (20). A concern shared by employability enhancement organizations or programs like ES is the possibility that the programming intervention is resulting

in participants shifting their dependence from social assistance to unemployment insurance. The data available for the conduct of the evaluation did not, however, permit us to identify whether this kind of relationship existed.

Did the programs strengthen the participants' personal sense of employment readiness (or self worth)?

CONCLUSION

ES Programming made participants more employment ready. An important reason for this is that the ability of participants to deal with their leading barrier to employability (taking care of family matters) was improved primarily as a result of the group/individual counselling provided by the program.

In general, participants considered all their skills to have been improved.

Notwithstanding this improvement participants had less work experience than the population at large and, as a result, were less confident about their working abilities.

We also conclude that the emphasis in the program on encouraging educational upgrading may result in participants taking "casual employment which would reduce their ability to maintain employment.

Overall, the emphasis on educational upgrading, and participants lack of work experience and confidence are primary reasons explaining why participants have less success maintaining employment following their participation in the ES program.

ISSUE FOCUS

This issue looks specifically at whether the training provided by ES improved the participants' perceptions about being ready to meet the requirements of employment within the job market. The barriers to employment that were examined were those that an individual might be able to influence or change and thereby enhance their employment prospects.

Environmental barriers to employment were not addressed by this research, because they are not controllable by either individuals, or by employment enhancement programs such as ES. Such "macro level" barriers include the availability of "well paying jobs," the availability of transportation, and affordable daycare. Individual or "micro level" programs such as ES cannot influence such factors. Because of this situation, evaluation research for this issue was approached in the following terms in order for the results to be practical: "given that there are some environmental economic barriers to employment faced by the entire labour force, is there any room to manoeuvre at the program level that would contribute to employability enhancement through

EXHIBIT 5

Did the Programs Strengthen the Participants' Personal Sense of Employment Readiness?

Skill	% neutral, somewhat disadvantage and major disadvantage	% moderately helpful and very helpful
Completing job application	43	69
Being interviewed for a job	45	65
Writing a résumé	54	65
Education	54	54
Work experience	44	56
Job training	48	54
Taking care of family matters that interrupt the work day	65	74
Confidence in your ability to work	31	70
Working together with others	16	70
Working with same amount of supervision as everyone else at work	23	70
Ability to be on time	11	70
Ability to go to work regularly	17	68
Dressing appropriately for the job	21	59
Health	23	60
Generally feeling fit	31	59

Note: "Neutral" was grouped with "disadvantage" and "major disadvantage" because any skill or factor ranked "neutral" could not be interpreted as being advantageous to an individual.

the reduction of employment barriers and a related strengthening of a personal sense of employment readiness?"

It is evident that one of the major difficulties Social Assistance Recipient's face is overcoming problems or deficiencies in skills or abilities that limit their possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment. In the analysis of this question these are referred to as barriers to employment.

A barrier for this presentation was defined as a topic or skill area that was a very serious problem, somewhat of a problem, or neutral in terms of helping to get a job. The reason for including neutral ratings with the "barriers" is that a factor which is not a "plus" does not help a person get a job: generally speaking employers want the "right" person for a job, not a mediocre applicant.

Our research into this issue has focused on achieving the following two objectives:

- assessing ES participants' perceptions regarding certain factors which may act as barriers to employment; and
- determining participants' views on how effective ES programming was in improving various skills or factors related to their employability.

FINDINGS

Two separate survey questions provided the answers to these objectives. For a list of 15 skills or factors, respondents were asked:

- first, if they viewed the skill or factor as a barrier, that is, as something that was a disadvantage for them when they were looking for work; and
- second, if they perceived the program as helpful in improving these skills as barriers, that is, for the same factors they were asked if their participation in the program helped them improve these skills.

Exhibit 5 outlines the results. When interpreting these results, it is worthwhile to note that the survey responses came from persons who had been associated with ES at differing periods in the past. For some persons, the barriers that they face and program experience would be recent. For others, their program experience may have occurred more than a year ago. The analysis/results to follow presumed that respondents were able to recall those areas where the program was helpful.

In descending order of importance the following five main factors were perceived as barriers by ES participants:

- taking care of family matters that interrupt the work day (65%);
- writing a resume (54%);

**Exhibit 6 — Correspondence of Severity of Barriers and Perceived Helpfulness of ES
Conceptual Framework**

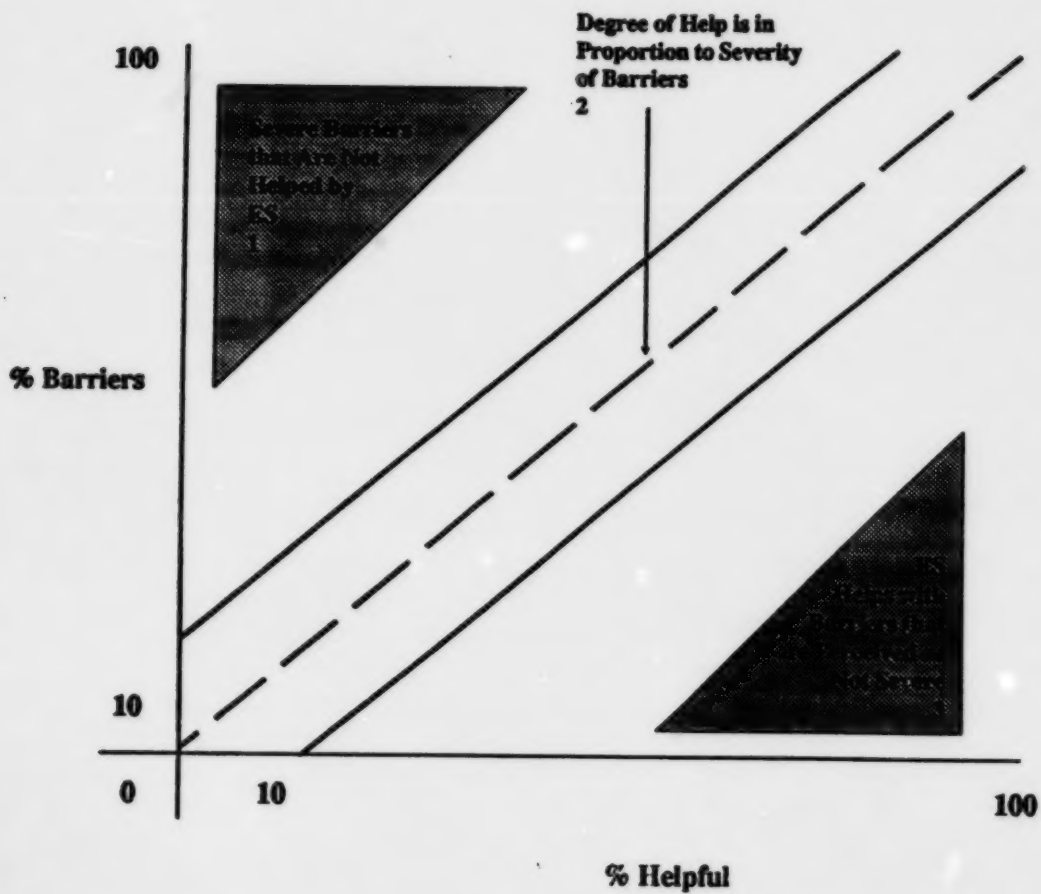
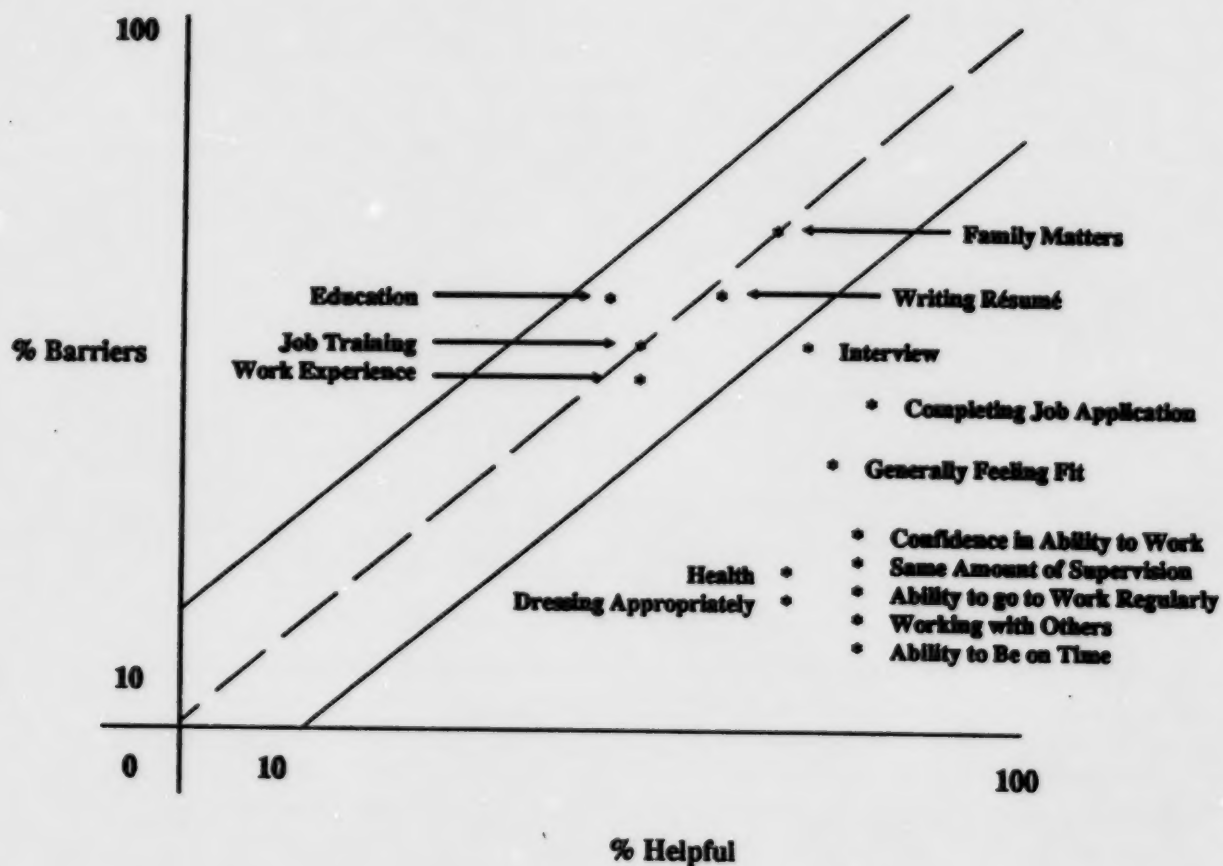


**Exhibit 7 — Correspondence of Severity of Barriers and Perceived Helpfulness of ES
Conceptual Framework**



- education (54%);
- job training (48%); and
- handling job interview (45%).

In looking at how participants perceived ES programming as helping them improve certain skills, we discovered that the following were ranked the highest and, therefore considered to be the most improved:

- taking care of family matters that interrupt the work day (74%);
- confidence in your ability to work (70%);
- working together with others (70%);
- working with same amount of supervision as everyone else at work (70%); and
- ability to be on time (70%).

The key finding derived from these two lists is that taking care of family matters that interrupt the work day was perceived not only as the most important barrier to employability but also the one that participants perceived was most improved by the program. The highest percentage of participants saw it as both a barrier and a skill that was improved.

It is worth noting, as well, that the other skills found in the first list are not found in the second. This suggests that those skills identified as more important

barriers (and which, interestingly, are skills addressed directly by ES programming) were not perceived by participants as being improved as much as other skills were. For example, the difference between the severity of the barrier to employability and skills improvement is most evident in the area of education, where participants saw it as an important barrier, but only 54% of respondents (the lowest percentage for any topic) perceived it as being improved by ES programming. It should be noted that 68% of ES participants surveyed had received a grade ten education or lower.

Exhibits 6 and 7 map the extent to which respondents viewed a particular skill or factor as a barrier to employment relative to the extent that the ES programming was perceived as improving the same skill or factor. Exhibit 6 provides a diagrammatic explanation of the graph's areas and Exhibit 7 presents the actual plotting of all 15 skills or factors.

The diagonal area in Exhibits 6 and 7 outlines a region where the points in which the consensus concerning a factor as a barrier is roughly matched by the extent to which there is (or isn't) a consensus about the program as a significant source of help for the same factor. In terms of the allocation of resources to ES programming emphases, one would expect to see in an ideal situation a mapping of most points along the diagonal. Thus, as more persons see a factor as a barrier, hopefully a

comparable percentage would see ES programming as a source of help.

There could be (and was in some cases) a mismatch between the perception of an item as a barrier, and the perception of ES as a source of help. If ES is devoting resources to areas that are not perceived by many persons as barriers, then on average the programming may be overemphasizing some topics. Alternatively, the upper left hand region of the graph indicates areas where a high proportion of persons perceive a serious barrier, but few of them see ES as a source of significant help. In some ways this region would be more serious in terms of failing to help large numbers of persons. Points to the left of the diagonal can be perceived as "under helped" and points to the right can be perceived as "over helped". This exhibit clearly illustrates the main findings.

There were five to seven factors (or about one-third of the factors) fall in the region where the numbers of persons perceiving helpfulness was in proportion to the numbers of persons perceiving a serious problem.

ES does appear to be rated by many persons as quite helpful in some areas (about two-thirds of the factors considered) that many do not perceive as serious barriers. Some caution is necessary when interpreting these results because certain minorities of respondents may need help with areas that are not a barrier for the majority.

The program does avoid having any items in the serious area (the upper left triangle of Exhibit 7) where a data point would indicate failure to be helpful in an area of serious need.

In general, the program follows a conservative broad-band approach, which means that it avoids leaving out serious problem areas by covering most contingencies, even if this may mean offering effective help with areas that go beyond participants' perceptions of a severe of a barrier.

In comparing the perceptions of participants from Project 1000 and the other ES Programs regarding the list of 15 skills or factors, we found that they were not much different. The only meaningful differences between programs were related to resume writing. Project 1000 sole support parents found resume writing to be less of a barrier than participants of other programs. This may be explained by two aspects of the program. First, many P1000 participants were going into a skill upgrading/return to education track, rather than an immediate return to the labour force. For these women, a resume is less relevant. Second, the focus group indicated that many women who do return to work stay strictly with job application forms. This situation indicates that while the averages reported here communicate a general sense of participants' needs and ratings of helpfulness, individual respondents may have valid reasons for having divergent views of the severity of a given

EXHIBIT 8

Comparison Between Participants and the Comparison Group of Skills or Factors that Might Create Difficulty When Searching for Work

Skill	% neutral, somewhat disadvantage and major disadvantage	
	<u>Participant</u>	<u>Comparison</u>
Completing job application	43	63
Being interviewed for a job	45	25
Writing a résumé	54	51
Education	54	50
Work experience	44	17
Job training	48	36
Taking care of family matters that interrupt the work day	65	92
Confidence in your ability to work	31	17
Working together with others	16	16
Working with same amount of supervision as everyone else at work	23	70
Ability to be on time	11	37
Ability to go to work regularly	17	27
Dressing appropriately for the job	21	36
Health	23	35
Generally feeling fit	31	45

employment barrier and the amount of help they desire.

One final set of observations is worth pointing out on this issue. Exhibit 8 compares the percentage of participants and individuals in the comparison group who perceived factors as barriers when searching for work. For many of the factors a higher percentage of individuals in the comparison group perceived them as barriers. The focus groups indicated some possible explanations for these differences:

- Participants appear disadvantaged with respect to:
 - being interviewed
 - work experience
 - job training
 - confidence in ability to work

This may be related to the fact that many of the focus group participants reported they were more interested in upgrading their education and skills than in an immediate return to employment. This was particularly the case for P1000 participants. It also appeared that many of these persons had not sought out work, or had not previously worked.

The comparison group had a long lasting involvement in the labour force. This would reduce their concerns about work experience and confidence. It would also make them more capable of obtaining and maintaining employment.

Although the program significantly assisted participants in reducing barriers to employability, participants by virtue of their limited work experience have less confidence in dealing with the demands of the workplace. Only until they remain for some time in the employment marketplace will they be able to develop that confidence and show the same ability as the comparison group in obtaining and maintaining employment.

The results may also indicate a (hopefully) short term educational bias for the ES participants on average, and thus have the short term consequence of individuals either taking "casual employment" or staying away altogether from the labour force. They would, therefore, have been less likely to maintain employment following their involvement in the ES program.

- ES participants appeared in the focus groups to be more advantaged than the comparison group in terms of:
 - job applications
 - family matters
 - working with same supervision
 - ability to be on time
 - work regularly
 - appropriate dress
 - health
 - fitness

The program emphasized dealing with family matters, and respondents reported the program as being very

helpful in this respect. Time use, work regularity and health/fitness may be related to the assistance with family matters, especially in terms of becoming more organized and routinizing their lifestyle.

The extent that employability enhancement programs have educational upgrading as one of their multiple objectives, greatly complicates efforts to evaluate them as employability programs. Interviews with program officials repeatedly indicated that the lack of adequate education was seen as one of the most important barriers to employment for their clients. To a certain extent it may be inappropriate for funding agencies to think of projects such as ES as employability programs. It may be more appropriate to think of them as programs that attempt to help individuals organize and acquire some control over their lives. Some activities may have only very long term relationships to eventual employment activity by participants. To the extent that this is the case, and that any tax supported project is ultimately accountable for attaining some kind of results, it is important for program orientation to be acknowledged and for the multiple non-employment goals to be clearly defined. In the absence of clear criteria for recognizing measurable program success, more narrow criteria will eventually be used by default for future evaluation and accountability purposes. To a certain extent, this is what has occurred during the course of the current evaluation. In the future, it may be necessary to plan these programs to allow for long-term

careful follow-up and data collection, in order to properly evaluate whether or not educational upgrading actually translates into improved employability at a much later point in time.

Did the programs improve the participants' financial situation? (Issue 4)

CONCLUSION

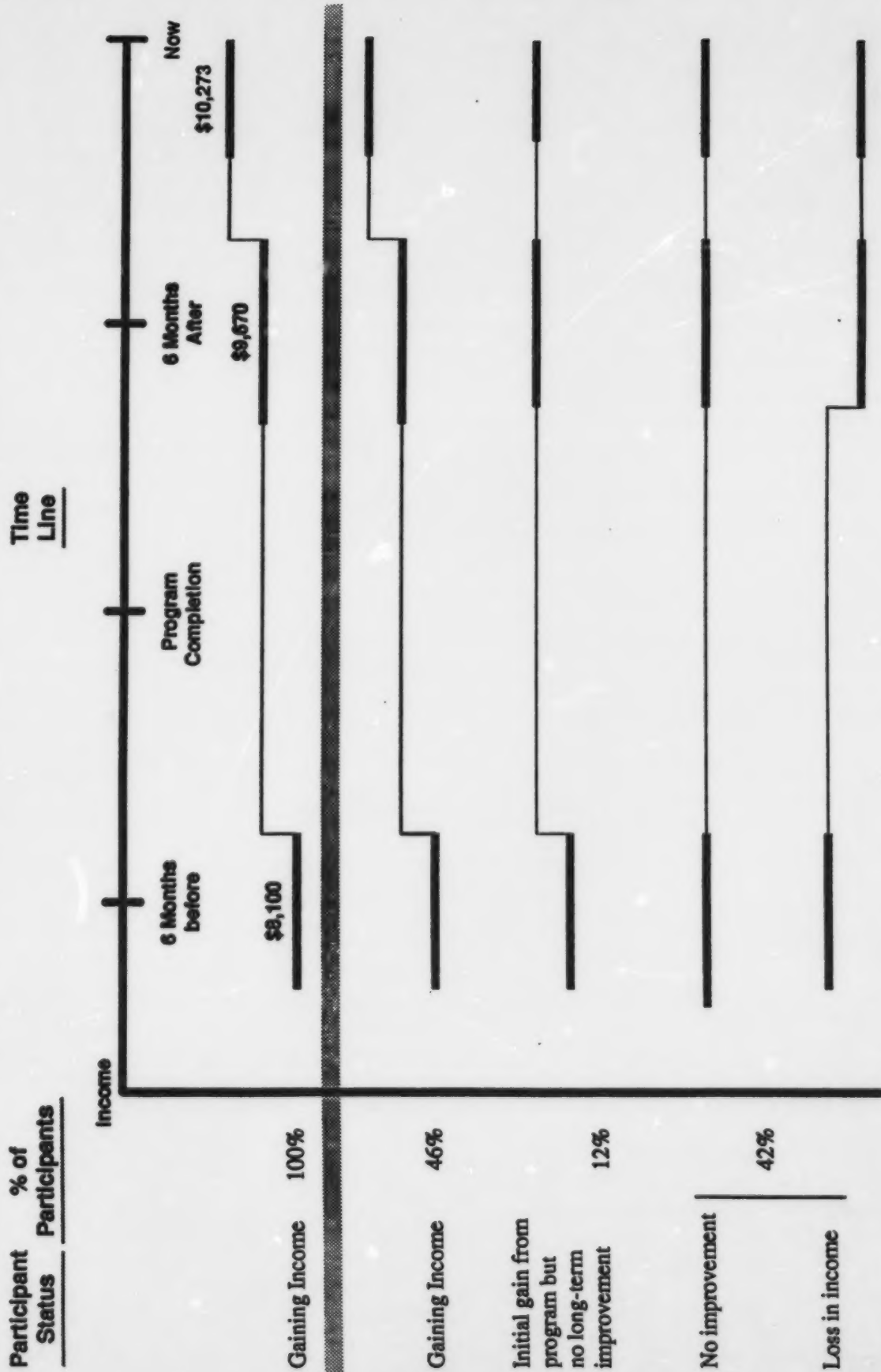
Participant's financial situations improved significantly following participation in ES because they found jobs.

We concluded that job related income was higher than what might have been gained from a reliance on social assistance. Financial betterment (as one might anticipate) tends to be related to the ability to obtain a higher job-related income. Financial loss tends to be related to a dependence on income assistance.

ISSUE FOCUS

This issue is focused on assessing whether ES succeeded in improving the financial situation of participants. The result hoped for from an employability enhancement organization like ES is that participants will improve their employment record and, in turn, live under better financial circumstances.

Exhibit 9 — Selected Scenarios on the Changes in Financial Situation for ES Program Participants



FINDINGS

Improvement in the financial situation of participants was inferred from the telephone survey of respondents. Exhibit 9 depicts the financial outcomes for participants and includes the following elements:

- the monetary gains achieved by all (100%) of participants surveyed depicted in the top line of the exhibit; and
- the four typical financial trajectories or outcomes of different groups of participants.

Financial data from the survey covered income 6 months before ES, six months after completion, and at an unspecified time more than 6 months following completion (where applicable).

In the top line of the exhibit we show that in the six months prior to ES participation, average annual income was \$8100. In the six months after completion of ES, income rose on average by \$1570, to \$9670, or a 19% rise. In the period more than six months after ES completion (which varies in length for different generations of program graduates), income rose \$603 for a further 6.2% gain. Even allowing for inflation, the post-ES rises in income for all participants are substantial.

Of all participants that were sampled, 58% indicate that they are financially better off as compared to their pre-ES

circumstances. The remaining 42% of participants perceive that their financial situation is the same or lower than their situation prior to ES participation.

Of these persons who indicate an improvement (the 58%), 4 out of 5 report that their financial situation showed still further improvement at some point later than six months following ES participation. This latter group represents persons who have managed to attain a standard of living that had improved at two points in time after ES participation; they represent almost half (46%) of the total number of persons who participated in ES. This group is depicted by the income trajectory in the second line within Exhibit 6.

A common concern with employability programs is that perhaps a majority of participants obtain only a very temporary "boost" from the program. Survey data indicated that only about 12% of all participants appear to have attained a one-time post-ES improvement in financial situation, with no further increase reported. This is the income trajectory indicated in the third line in the exhibit. The two income trajectories we have described cover 58% of all respondents. The remaining 42% are split across many different outcomes such as those indicated in the bottom two lines of the exhibit.

Improvements in post-ES financial status appears to be related to job income as the primary source of income. The increases in employment levels noted in Issue 1 (previously discussed) do

translate into financial gains for participants. The proportion of persons who indicated they were financially better off represented 58% of all participants surveyed. For 45% of this group the primary source of income was a job which was by far the largest proportion of individuals that identified their source of income. The remaining individuals that were better off were diverse in reporting primary income sources.

The proportion of participants who were financially worse off was 42%. For 45% of these individuals the primary source of income was income assistance.

The conclusion to draw from this is that for individuals that felt financially better off, the primary source of income tended to be a job. For individuals financially worse off, the primary source of income tended to be income assistance.

The average job-related annual income for persons who indicate that they are financially better off after the program is \$7,728. For those persons who are not better off, their average job-related income is only \$3,384. Therefore, program participation is associated with higher employment levels, and employment is moderately related to improved financial situation.

The analysis of this issue does indicate the need to be cautious when attributing post-ES income improvements to an employability program. In about half of all cases, respondents who were not primarily reliant upon job-related income were able to find some method by which

to improve their financial situation. Alternative sources of income would include self-employment, unemployment insurance, training allowances, savings, spouse, etc. These alternatives are important complicating factors when attempting to attribute rising incomes to a particular program as their cause.

Another way of viewing the financial outcome of ES is to compare the participants to the comparison group. Using an imputed income level for the comparison group (assuming 5% inflation and about one year of elapsed time), the comparison group's average income of about \$12,500 compares to the \$8100 average for pre-ES participants. The gap between the two is statistically significant, even when controlling for educational differences, and the male/female ratio. Thus the income gap between the two groups was \$4400, which was 54% of the participants pre-program income.

Regarding our derivation of an imputed income level, it should first be noted that comparison group individuals never went through ES, by definition. It was not, therefore, possible to directly determine what their program income was at the time of entry to ES. Therefore, we took their currently reported income levels and used a 5% inflation rate and one year of elapsed time to impute an income level that could be compared with ES participant income levels.

After ES participation, the income gap between the two groups narrows, but does not disappear. The income

comparison after ES is \$13,100 versus \$10,300. Given the size of the data set and the need to control from some background variables, it is not possible to make strong statistical statements about the remaining gap. It does not appear that ES actually brings participants up to income levels of a comparison group in their area.

In this sense, the outcome of the ES programming is somewhat favourable, but not clear cut. While there is improvement for participants compared to their own pre-ES income levels, the programming probably does not enable them to actually "catch-up" with income levels in their area.

Did the programs end or reduce the participants' dependence on social assistance? (Issue 2)

CONCLUSION

Dependence on social assistance declined following ES participation. The research from previous issues shows that improvements in participants' abilities to obtain employment is translated to higher levels of employment and therefore less reliance on social assistance.

In the six months prior to ES completion 81% of participants reported they received assistance compared to 59% six months afterwards. In principle 100% of participants should have reported they were on social assistance

prior to ES participation since all participants are referred to ES by social assistance officials.

ISSUE FOCUS

The purpose of this issue is to determine whether participants' involvement in ES had an appreciable effect in reducing their overall reliance on social assistance. Clearly, if an individual after participation had a better record of obtaining and sustaining employment than before participation they would become less reliant on social assistance.

FINDINGS

We have noted earlier that the employment histories of individuals improve after ES participation. Correspondingly, it is also evident that the number of participants receiving social assistance declines. Since ES participants are all referred by social assistance officials, in principle 100% of survey respondents should have reported they were on social assistance in the six month period prior to ES, which was the case for the focus group participants. For the six month period before ES, 81% of participants surveyed reported they had received social assistance compared to 59% six months after ES. Improvement (in terms of reduced welfare), therefore, is either from 100% to 59%, or 81% to 59%, depending upon the reasoning and evidence used to obtain a result. Despite this conflicting

evidence, either measurement of improvement is substantial.

A possible explanation provided by ES program officials for this difference is that some individuals, particularly those that are able-bodied can be referred to ES within 3-4 days of being accepted for social assistance. These individuals may not yet have even received a social assistance cheque before program entry. Therefore, when the participant survey was administered they tended to recall that they were not on social assistance in the six months before entering ES. The survey questionnaire did not ask individuals to indicate whether they received assistance during their involvement in ES.

Other possible explanations include:

- falsifying of information provided to social assistance authorities; and
- faulty respondent recall.

During the focus groups conducted following the survey, all participants reported that they were all receiving social assistance at the time they entered the program. In earlier years, it is possible that a few participants may have been on UI, rather than social assistance. It is difficult given the data at our disposal, to prove conclusively which conflicting line of evidence is correct. On balance, as a matter of evaluation judgement, ERN feels that the focus group and ES officials' views that were in fact on assistance should receive more weight.

The results outlined above are reflected in the mean or average amounts of social assistance participants reported receiving monthly before and after their involvement in ES. Before ES the mean social assistance received per month was \$617 compared to \$419 after ES: a reduction of \$198.

In comparing the social assistance history of respondents who went through only Project 1000 to those who went only through other programs a similar result is evident. Seventeen percent fewer Project 1000 participants were on social assistance after their program involvement. Similarly, 22% fewer participants from other ES Programs were receiving social assistance after their program involvement.

There is, however, no apparent lessening in the difference between Project 1000 and other ES programs in the percentage of respondents who received assistance. Before their involvement, 8% fewer participants from other ES programs compared to Project 1000 were receiving assistance. After their involvement there was a difference of 7%. ES programming, therefore, does not appear to cause any reduction in this difference.

Comparing the mean amounts of social assistance received monthly both before and after ES participation, Project 1000 participants who reported this income drew \$199 dollars less on average in social assistance payments. Respondents in other programs reported a \$194 reduction in mean social assistance.

Participants in other ES Programs received a considerably lower level of social assistance than those in Project 1000, both before and after program participation. For example, before participation the mean social assistance income for Project 1000 and other programs was \$665 and \$484, respectively: a difference of \$181.

What were the costs of the programs compared to social assistance? (Issue 15)

CONCLUSION

Social assistance savings that can be attributed to ES programming are estimated at approximately \$2.1 million per year. These savings exceed the cost of running those parts of the program that were evaluated.

Taking into account the information gained from previous issues we conclude that the savings are due to the improved employment situation of participants following their involvement in ES.

ISSUE FOCUS

This issue addresses the appropriateness of ES programming on the basis of cost and benefit. One may wish to look at its costs as generally less than the cost of maintaining participants on the same level of assistance of social assistance they were earning before they entered ES.

FINDINGS

In researching this issue we took the difference of the mean amounts of social assistance participants reported they received before and after ES programming to derive an average net welfare saving of \$197.82 per month per questionnaire respondent. This translated into an amount of \$2,374 per year per respondent.

Based on the figures contained in the Evaluation Assessment concerning the number of participants involved in 1988 in the ES component programs, we determined that for an approximate population of 872 the total net savings in social assistance that occurred as a result of ES summed up to \$2,070,128. This figure is an estimate of the net yearly savings in social assistance achieved by ES. It assumes respondents to the survey adequately reflect the characteristics of the ES participant population. While these figures are affected by the 19% of respondents that indicated that they had received no assistance prior to the program, no other data was available upon which an estimate could be based.

In taking the analysis of net savings further, it is evident that one year of savings in social assistance offsets approximately 1 1/2 years of the ES budget for 1988/89. To put it another way, 8 months of social assistance savings by a "cohort" of ES graduates would offset the 12 months in expenses it took

Exhibit 10
Helpfulness of Each Component of the Programs for Employability

PROJECT 1000 (n=70)

Work Experience	4.1
Job Information	4.0
Academic Upgrading	4.0
Community Resources	3.9
Personal Counselling	3.9
Life Skills Training	3.9
Job Search Techniques	3.8
Career Counselling	3.8
Work Placement	3.8
Family Coping Skills	3.8
Effective Parenting	3.7

YOUTH PROSPECTS (n=10)

Work Experience	4.7
Job Information	4.3
Job Search Techniques	4.3
Life Skills Training	4.3
Career Counselling	4.3
OWL	4.1

SSEP (n=19)

On the Job Training	3.7
Personal Counselling	3.6
Counselling or help solving Job Problems	3.4

Notes: The sample sizes associated with Case Aide Training and ERS were too small to present average results. The scale indicated uses a value of 1 to indicate "not at all helpful, to 5 for "very helpful", with 3 as a neutral rating of "somewhat helpful".

to train them. These figures reveal that the overall cost of ES are very reasonable and that government more than breaks even on what it would have otherwise spent anyway during the course of a year.

Regarding the cost comparison analysis above, it should be recognized that the results are estimates which provide a good indication of the extent to which costing savings to government were achieved through the program. The ES budget used in the comparisons had no allocations specified for SSEP, as well as Case Aide Training which ES management informed us, at the time of the assessment, had not actually received its proposed funding.

Which elements of the programs contribute most to success ? (Issue 12, Elements Strengthened)

CONCLUSION

In general, respondents found the individual components of the ES programs to be helpful. No single component decisively outscored the others, with the possible exception that work experience was particularly valuable in the Youth Prospects program. We conclude that multiple service delivery was probably valuable in the freedom of choice that it could provide to program administrators. However, we found that very few individuals (approximately 5%) were involved in multiple programs. This seems to contradict assertions by

ES program staff that the multiple-program approach is an important service delivery feature of ES, because the large majority of participants do not receive any benefits from access to different programs. Generally we conclude that the evidence concerning the advantages of multiple service delivery in ES is weak.

ISSUE FOCUS

This issue concentrates on determining which of the individual components of employability enhancement programs contribute most to the success of an individual in obtaining or maintaining employment.

HELPFULNESS OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Program participants were asked to rate the helpfulness of the individual components of each ES program they had been involved in, in making them feel more employable. Their responses were based on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being "not at all helpful" to 5 being "very helpful". Exhibit 10 presents the overall rankings of the program components. The following section summarizes the major findings.

On average, participants in Project 1000 found the different components to be moderately helpful in making them feel more employable. The average rankings ranged from a high of 4.1 awarded to Work Experience to a low of 3.7 awarded to Effective Parenting. A

statistical test determined that there were no significant differences between the rankings of the components.

Though the sample size was small (n=10), participants in Youth Prospects were very positive in their rankings of how helpful each component of the program was. No individual respondent ranked a component as being less than "somewhat helpful". On average, the rankings ranged from a high of 4.7 indicating "very helpful" awarded to Work Experience to a low of 4.1 indicating moderately helpful" awarded to OWL (Orientation to work skills and lifestyles). There were no significant differences between the rankings of the components.

Participants of SSEP, understandably, perceived On the Job Training as being the most helpful (3.7). It is the primary component of the SSEP program.

The sample sizes associated with participants who had participated in the Case Aide Training Program (n=1) or ERS (n=2) were too small to be able to make any conclusions concerning the results.

POTENTIAL PROGRAM ALTERATIONS

We conducted interviews with ES program officials which provided additional information concerning program element strengths and possibilities for change. The following results were determined:

- Participants seemed to gain the greatest satisfaction from components of ES programs which contained group sessions and training in pre-employment skills.
- Regarding opportunities to strengthen the ES programs, the interviewees made the following comments:
 - the enhancement of the educational capabilities or literacy levels of individuals either through in-program upgrading or liaison with schools should be addressed; and
 - funding limitations regarding the YP and ERS programs inhibit their improvement, but there was a recognition that these programs should be changed or strengthened.
- If there was only one program that could be retained, it was generally agreed that it should be Project 1000, because it is the largest and regarded as the most important.
- In terms of individual components of programs, interviewees considered in-class work to be the one component that should be retained if all others are eliminated. Interestingly, this view conflicts with participants' perceptions noted earlier. Participants valued most highly the work experience they obtained from ES.

- Interviewees identified possibilities for changing programs in the following ways:
 - better needs assessments for work placements;
 - longer work placements;
 - more group work;
 - streamlining the course curriculum to make it more "hard hitting" or "directional"; and
 - creating a more individualized program delivery which avoids a "cattle call" effect which participants of Project 1000 have identified.
- Revisit, but not necessarily re-evaluate or change, the relationship that exists between the ES programming and SAIS (Social Assistance and Income Support) offices.

MULTIPLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Interviews with program staff indicate that they believe strongly that their multiple service delivery approach produces much better results than if only one program was available. The original research plan intended to study differences between programs by comparing survey results for persons who had participated in the various programs. This analysis could not be completed due to small sample sizes that were obtained

at the sub-program level. Due to logistical difficulties, the telephone survey of participants was discontinued with only half the originally planned sample. Given the high mobility of ES past participants, even if the survey had been continued, preliminary analysis indicates that there still might not be sufficient information to draw the quantitative conclusions that would be desired on this issue. In a quantitative sense then, the evaluation was not able to develop information required to support conclusions about this area of concern relating to the ES program.

In a qualitative sense, the multiple service delivery approach may be of benefit to some individuals, although the evidence to support the conclusion that overall it is a very advantageous or important aspect of the program is weak. Interviews with program staff indicate that there may be benefits derived by program participants in terms of the flexibility it provides the ES staff. This flexibility in routing a participants into a program (or multiple programs), permits them to individualize the nature of the contact, which may be beneficial.

The case to be made for multiple service delivery rests mostly upon perception, and the logic of being efficient in matching participants with appropriate kinds of help. Less than five percent of records in the client database indicate that participants actually obtained assistance from more than one ES service. Thus, in order to conclude that multiple delivery is valuable, it would be necessary to assume that this multiple

exposure may be (although this cannot be proven at this point) particularly valuable for this minority. For the majority of persons who are routed through one program only, support for multiple delivery benefits must logically revert to the argument concerning the superior routing potential that it affords.

Were Training Skills Useful? **(Issue 5, secondary)**

CONCLUSION

In terms of training skills, interviews with ES staff indicated that on-the-job experience was particularly valuable. This experience probably needs to be coupled with classroom training. We concluded, again on the basis of modest amounts of data, that both experience and in-class training need to reinforce each other in the enhancement of employability.

ISSUE FOCUS

The intent of this issue is to look at the merits of training for "marketable" skills development (in-class training) as compared to the experience gained by program participants in on-the-job training. For the research conducted on this issue, which is of secondary importance to the core/central issues of this evaluation, we relied on the results of our interviews with ES program and government officials.

FINDINGS

A number of individuals interviewed regarded on-the-job experience as more important to the development of marketable job skills, because participants are immersed in the job milieu and get direct experience with the job market. However, it was recognized by a few interviewees that classroom training is necessary to provide participants with knowledge they might not otherwise get from a number of years of trial and error within the job market. It was pointed out that a judicious mix of on-the-job training with classroom teaching, would probably maximize the learning of job marketable skills, because participants after a period of on-the-job training would be able to come back to the class and with the assistance of the instructor/counsellor assess their recent experiences. The general conclusion of our interviews relating to this issue was that on-the-job experience and in-class training were both important to the development of marketable skills, but that they must reinforce each other in order to maximize changes in the employability potential of individuals.

Were Targets Achieved? (Issue 10, secondary)

CONCLUSION

It was not possible to reach a conclusion concerning the achievement of targets by ES because the concept of targets was not appropriate to the programming as it is now structured. For example, the clinical or counselling orientation of the programming is commendable in terms of the quality of interaction that occurs with clients. However, its orientation conflicts with the quantifiable measurement of program results.

Without these results it is not possible to define targets. The measurement of results is important for management and accountability purposes.

ISSUE FOCUS

This issue assesses whether ES maintains targets for program performance which can be used as input to evaluating ES.

In the sense in which the ERN group understands the concept of "targets", ES does not have targets, as such. A consensus opinion concerning targets was expressed by senior ES project staff and Ministry of Community and Social Services personnel during interviews conducted for the evaluation. This consensus held that targets could be set, but that they would not be very realistic. As expressed by one interviewee:

"success depends upon the clients and is defined by them and their levels of motivation...[ES is an enabler and empowerer]...to build up those motivation levels."

FINDINGS

There was acceptance in ES of process targets, such as the number of employers contacted per month, but these are not success targets in the ordinary sense of the term.

This situation is important because it provides a revealing message for policy makers, funding agencies, and evaluators who must reach conclusions concerning accountability and value-for-expenditure. Two radically different schools of thought must come to terms with each other in employability programs. One school of thought is represented by the clinical/counselling frame of mind. The other school of thought is represented by the policy maker who needs to measure results and discuss accountability in the political realm. The staff of employability programs tends, of necessity, to come from the clinical mould, while legislators and researchers come from a measurement-of-results accountability perspective.

Clinical practitioners naturally use the results of scientific inquiry, but they cannot (generally speaking) practice scientific method "on" their clients. Their situation is much like that of a medical doctor. In his (her) role as a researcher, a medical doctor may conduct controlled

experiments and dissect organisms to understand how they work. In the role of care giver, a medical doctor is restrained from being a scientist when offering treatment. The analytic tools that science depends upon (at best) might not help patients, and (at worst) might kill them. At the time that they treat someone, clinical practitioners become predominantly users of scientific knowledge, not generators of new data or knowledge.

Because of its nature, clinical assistance to an unemployed person is often an ongoing process, with no clear end, or only a vague termination point. This was expressed during the interviews when one individual pointed out (quite accurately and appropriately) that, "files are not closed now until a positive result has been achieved or the client drops out of sight."

Legislators are under increasing pressure to justify to the public what results have been purchased from the great expenses incurred in care-giving, counselling, and welfare support programs. This implies measurement, analysis, and definitions for countable results. Because of this, the evaluation/scientific methodologist and the clinical practitioner approach employability from very different directions.

In terms of data capture and performance targets, the clinical practitioner is concerned mostly about recording recent information about the current status of their clients. The history of clients, and the expenditure of

funding or effort to elaborately preserve records of pre-program client status are not central to clinical objectives. Because clinical contact is often ongoing, these programs do not have automatic "graduation" dates, or project termination dates. Although, there is no fixed end to the "treatment" relationship, this does not mean that there logically can be no automatic follow-up procedure that would comprehensively capture post-program results.

During this evaluation, research staff tried to use clinical record keeping systems to measure attainment of results. That effort became greatly complicated by this very situation: in their original form, the records used were not maintained in the style required for measurement. For example, the database indicates that 17% of participants in the database were employed full-time at the time of program closure. It is, however, almost impossible to interpret this item because many of ES services do not have a formal well-defined point of closure, or a rigorously reinforced time for follow-up evaluation. For the clinical care giver, such efforts are an administrative burden that drain time away from helping clients. Even if the clinical database was maintained differently, target attainment could not have been conclusively established because ES is not organized in terms of quantitative targets. Furthermore it does not have the funding to deal with ongoing data capture, training of personnel, or the proper maintenance of such files for management/evaluation purposes.

The evaluation conclusion that can be reached as a result of this experience is that program design must recognize the inherent conflicts between care giving and accountability. If accountability is desired, then funding is required for data capture. Planning and infrastructure are necessary to support a serious evaluation measurement effort, and measurable targets would need to be expressed. The conflicts between management/evaluation record keeping and clinical record keeping need to be discussed and reconciled. In particular, this means making a deliberate effort to avoid "overwriting" old data with current status updates in data systems. It also means a willingness to define some reasonable endpoint for "treatment", so that post-treatment measurement of results could be routinized. While in some sense it is not satisfying to indicate that no conclusions could be drawn on this issue, the attempt has generated important evaluation lessons with far-reaching implications. To the extent that ERN seeks to indicate "what works, for whom, and at what level of expenditure," the effort yielded insight that governments have not yet absorbed into their structural arrangements of funding levels.

The essential data on which the foregoing findings and conclusions are based are available separately as Volume II to this report.

5.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recognizing the gap that exists between participants' perception of employment barriers and the areas where ES is rated as most helpful, the program should respond to the situation. There are two ways this can occur:
 - if participants perceptions are faulty, further counselling might help them understand the genuine barriers that they must overcome; or
 - if the perceptions are genuine, then the program should consider ways to increase its helpfulness ratings in these areas.

Given the overall strong ratings of the program by participants, these changes should be evolutionary.

2. ES officials need to consider why they collect data of various kinds. The clinical versus the evaluation related data collection objectives of ES need to be clarified. The potential conflicts between these two major objectives needs to be resolved. After this needs analysis has been carried out, program record keeping and data capture should be optimized. This needs analysis should be carried out in conjunction with an effort to establish results oriented targets for ES. Such targets will become increasingly important as political leaders look for all employability enhancement programs to justify their resource allocations.
3. We recommend to the policy making community (federal, provincial, municipal) that care-giving programs be simplified. The multiple service delivery orientation of ES appears to more related to funding sources than to a well defined reason for distinguishing one clinical intervention from the others. While some freedom of choice may help individualize care-giving, a more streamlined structure might be more efficient, more convenient and less confusing for everyone involved.
4. ES should probably devote more attention to conducting follow-up measurement of the participants. This is particularly true in terms of

determining post program income levels. At the current time it appears that some income improvement does result from ES programming, but how this compares to what would otherwise happen in an area with a strong economy is ambiguous. If income improvement and job attainment are not clearly established for participants, then even the staff of ES are not fully in a position to understand what it is about their help that works, or for whom.

6.0

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we found that the program enhances the financial situation of participants, improves their skills levels, helps reduce dependence on social assistance (although some inter-program substitution may occur).

The welfare savings achieved results in a payback period for annual ES expenditures of approximately 8 months.

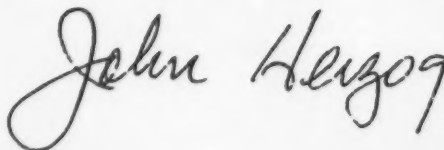
There are areas where program delivery could be enhanced and/or streamlined. Evidence concerning the importance and advantages associated with a multiple program approach to delivery is weak since only a small proportion of individuals benefit. In addition, the program's current approach and perspective towards data collection will not allow it to fulfil the data requirements of future evaluations. The extent and nature of post program contact with participants is still geared almost exclusively toward clinical applications. It is not possible for the program itself to truly take stock of what areas of ES programming are effective in terms of providing help, what areas

participants would like to see enhanced, and where resources could come from for possible modifications in service delivery.

In general, ES has provided a good opportunity with which to evaluate the operational pattern of a large metropolitan area social assistance agency. People are helped by ES. The evaluation was able to determine that further evaluation or management information feedback could be important for future efforts.

Our thanks our extended to the ES staff for assisting us in the conduct of this evaluation study.

**THE COOPERS & LYBRAND
CONSULTING GROUP**



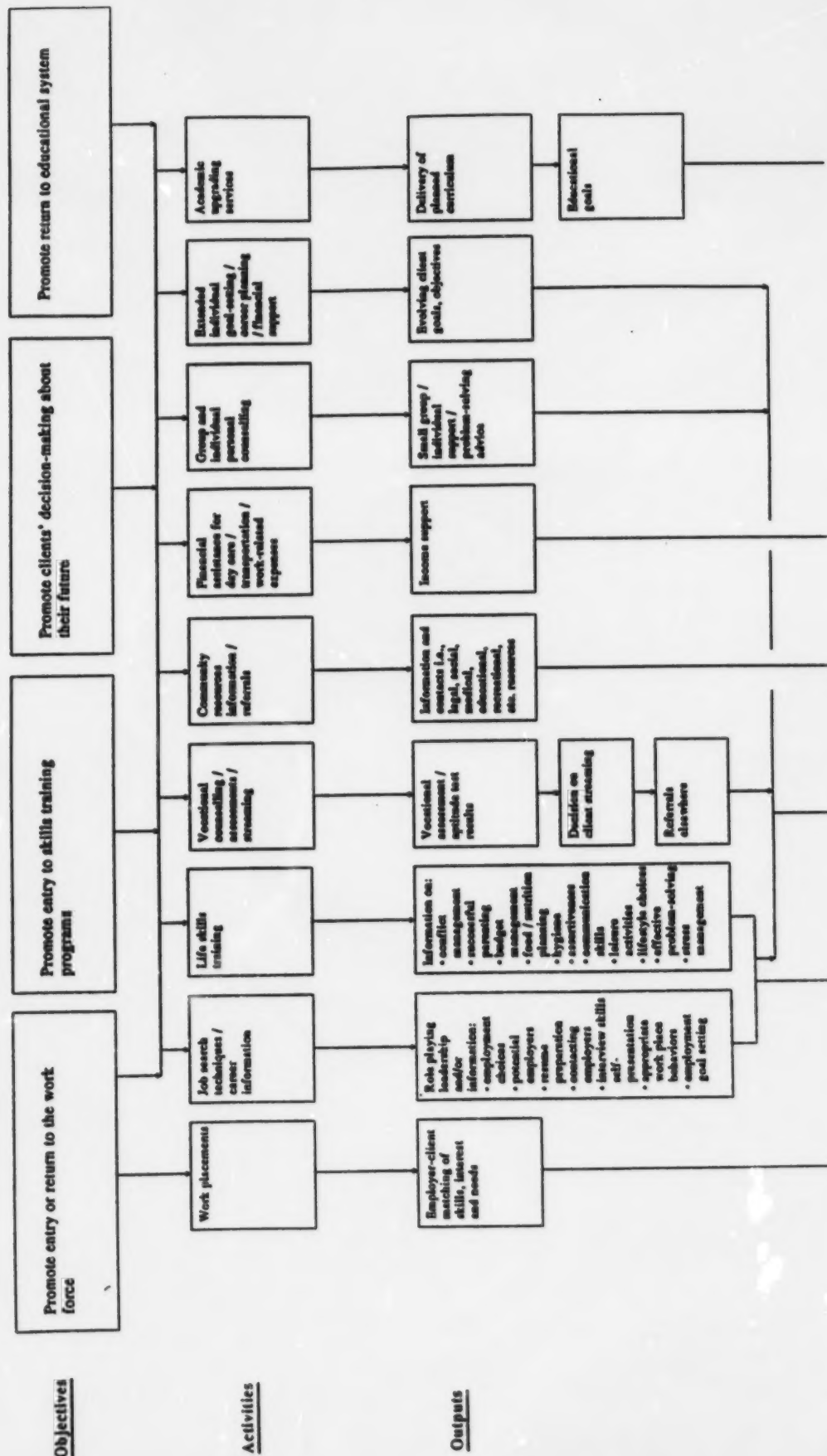
John P. Herzog, C.M.C., C.S.P
Partner



APPENDIX I

LOGIC MODELS FOR EACH ES PROGRAM

Exhibit II : EST — Project 1000 Program Logic Model



Impacts and Effects

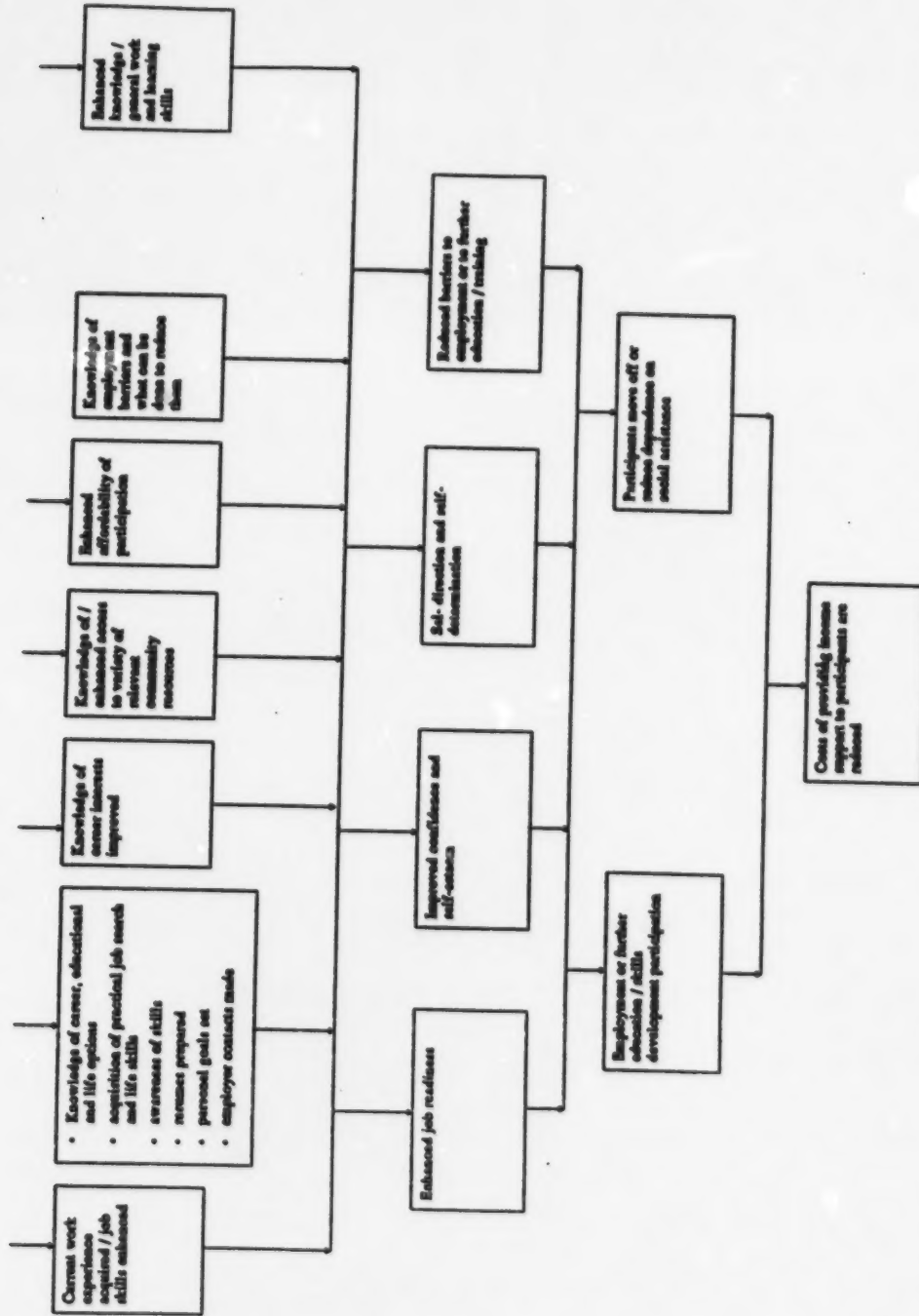
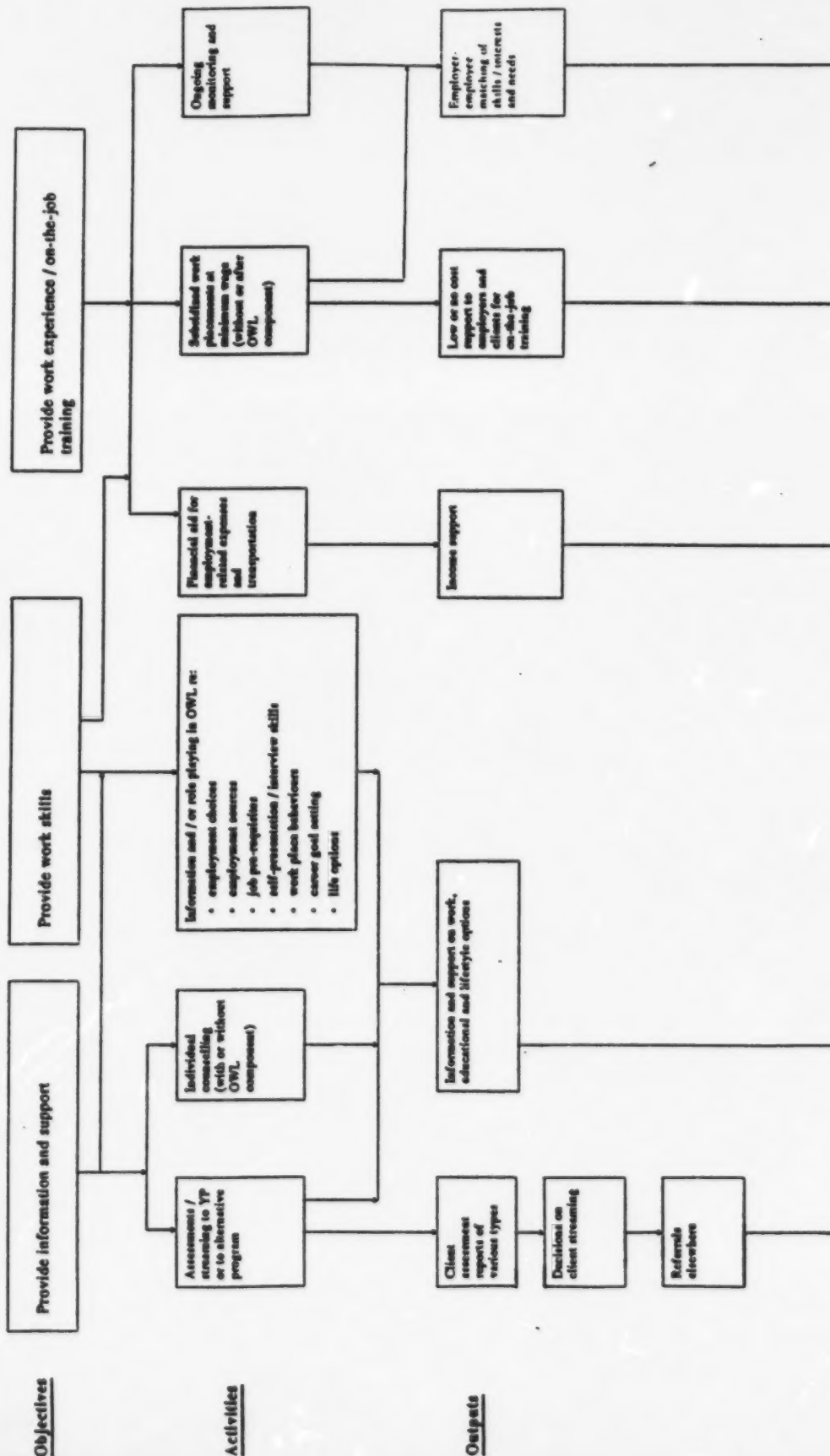
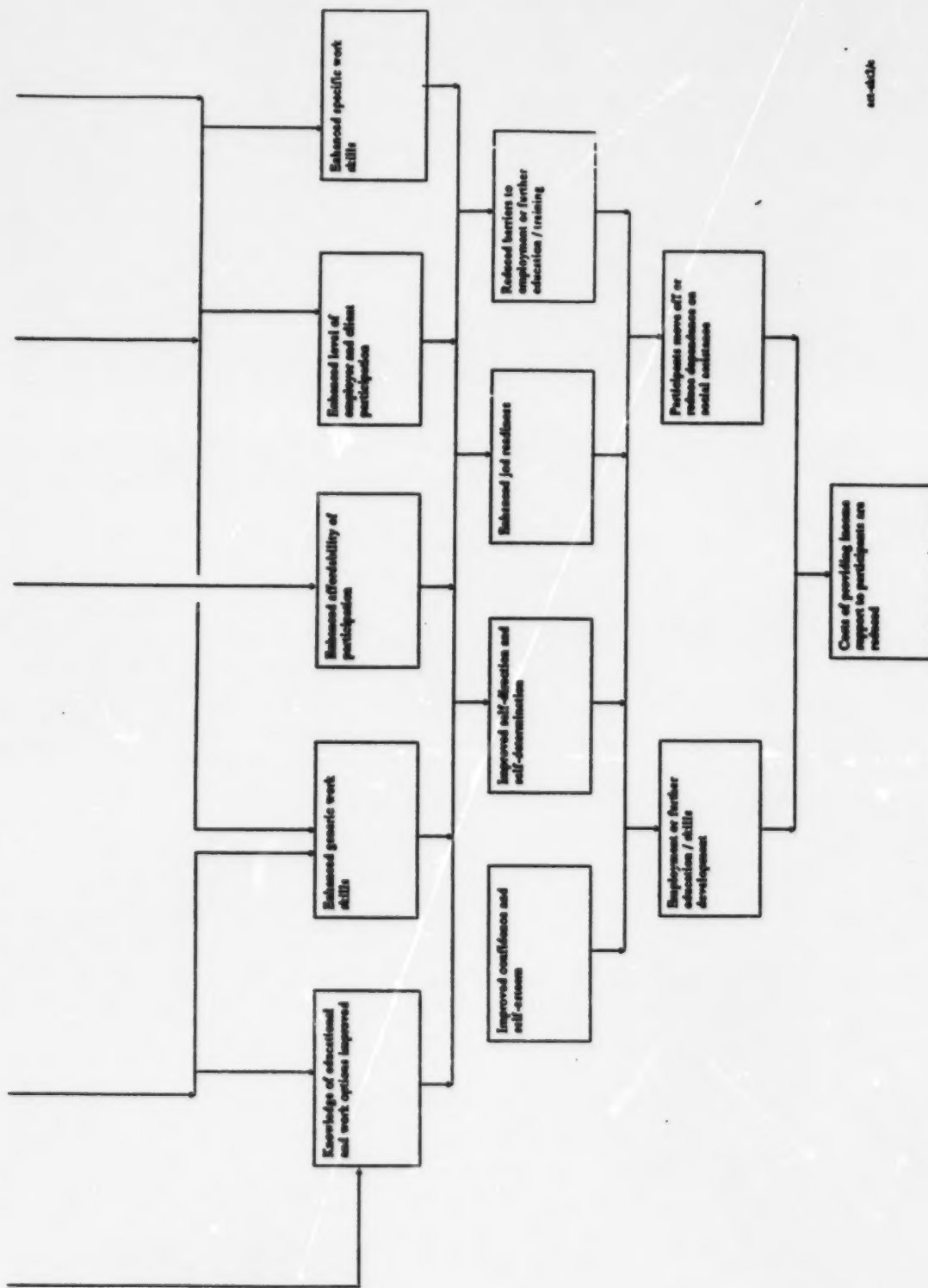


Exhibit II: EST — Youth Prospects Program Logic Model

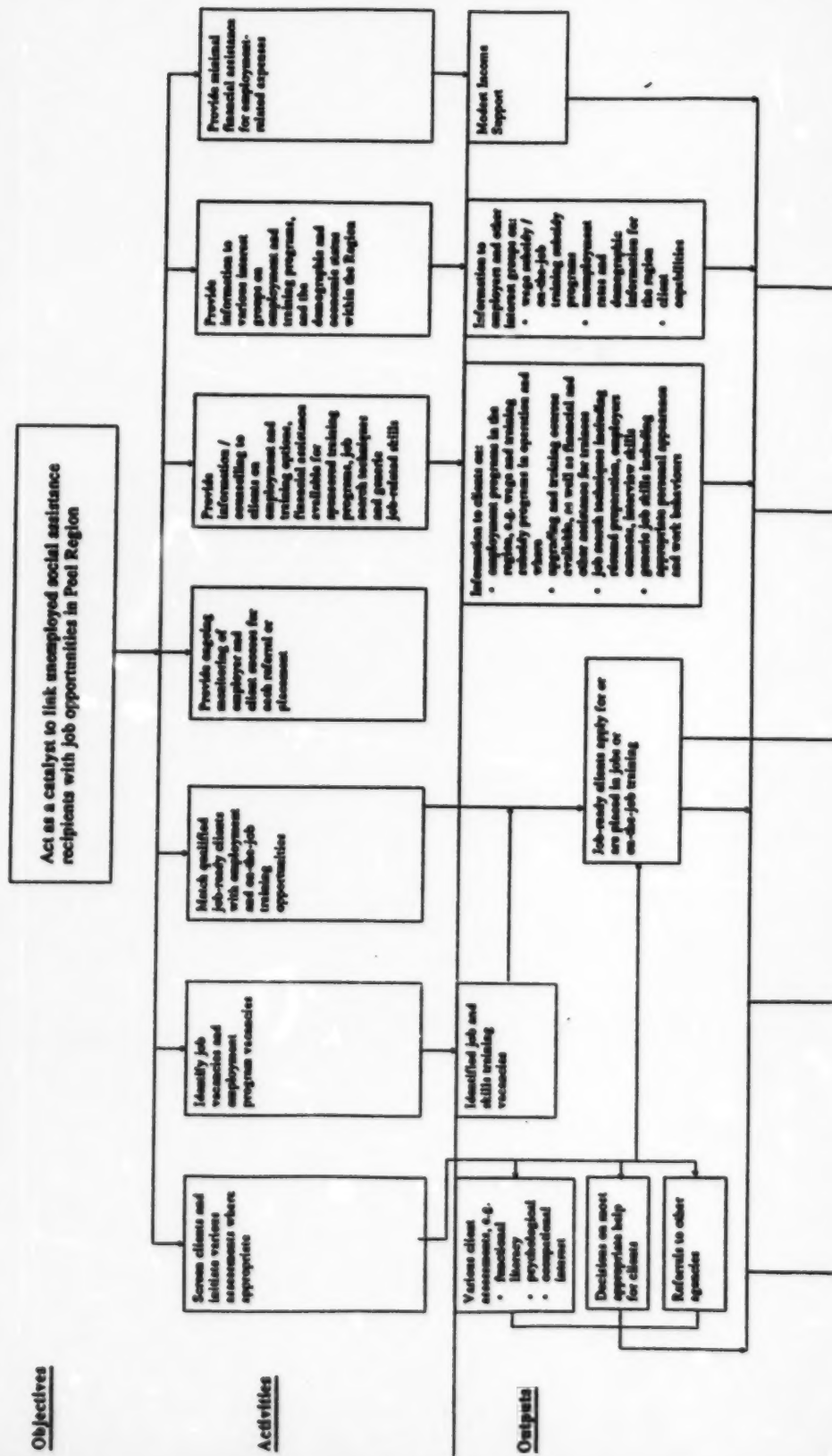


Impacts and Effects



Expected Outcomes

Exhibit II: EST — Employment Resource Service — Program Logic Model



Impacts &
Effects

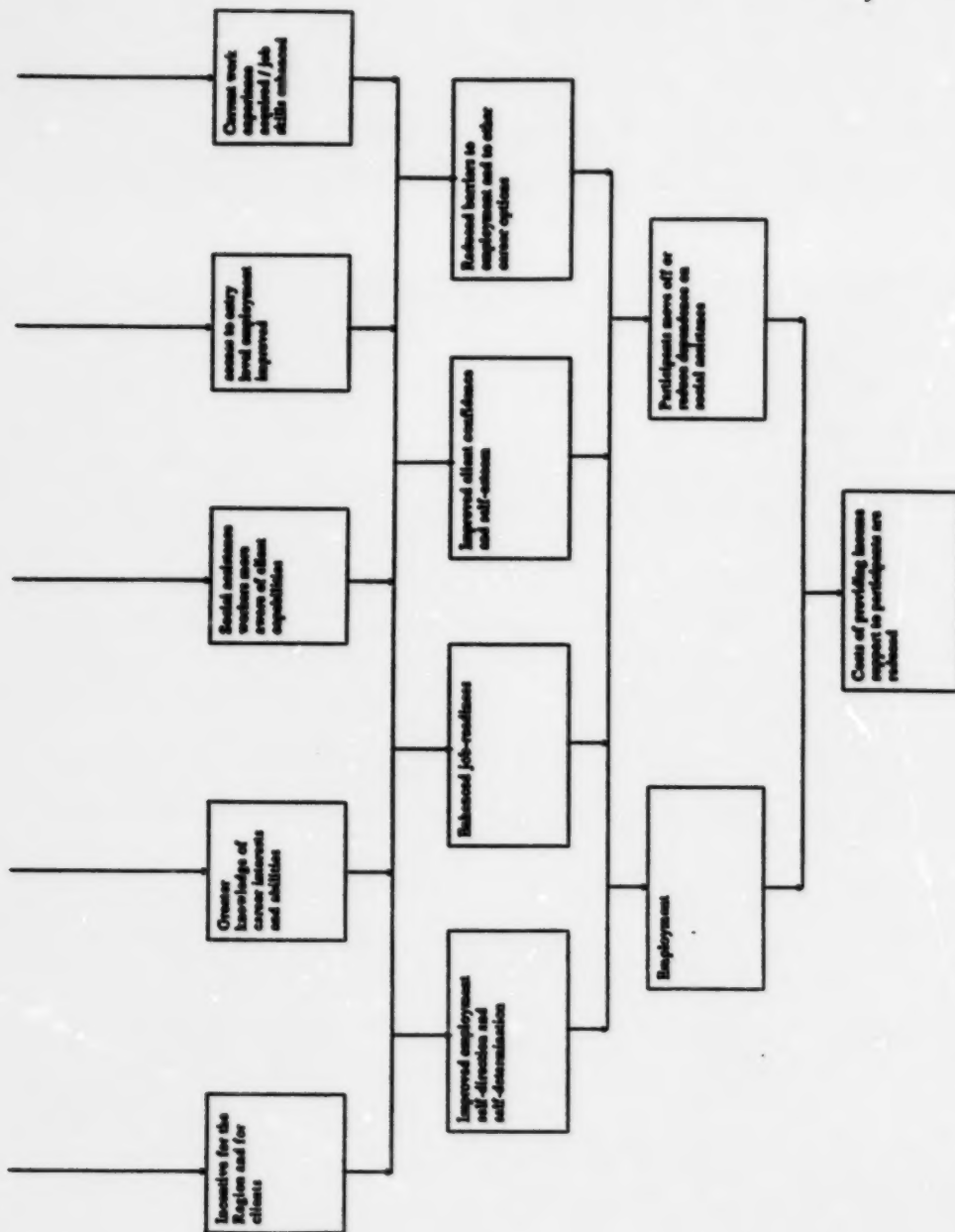
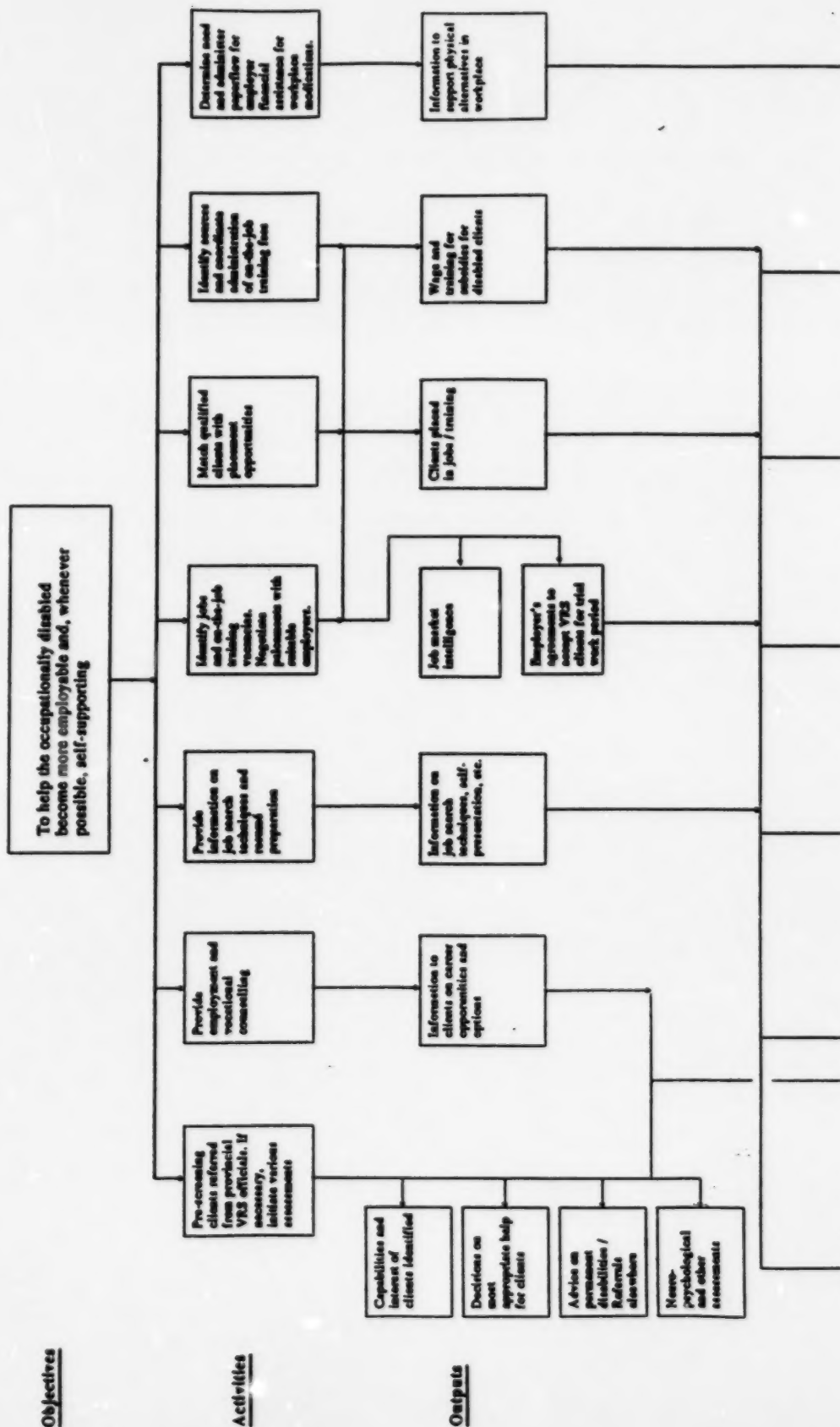


Exhibit II: EST — Vocational Rehabilitation Program Logic Model

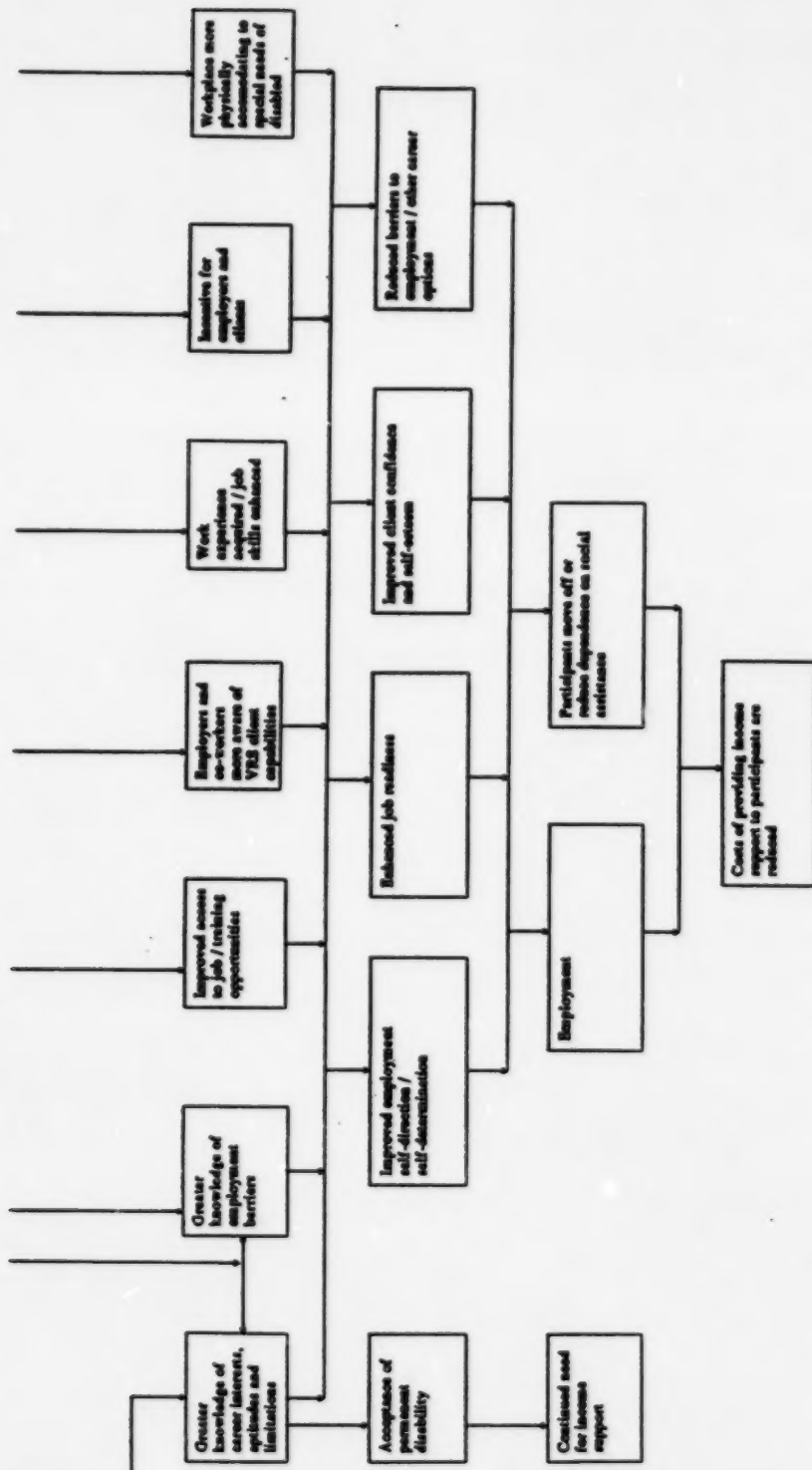


Objectives

Activities

Outputs

Impacts and Effects



APPENDIX II

DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

PEEL DATABASE

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	n	%
AGE OF PARTICIPANT		
UNDER 24.....	283	26
24 - 30.....	385	36
31 - 35.....	178	17
36 - 45.....	159	15
OVER 45.....	72	7
Total.....	1077	100
SEX		
MALE.....	338	23
FEMALE.....	1103	77
Total.....	1441	100
MARITAL STATUS		
SINGLE.....	553	52
MARRIED.....	121	11
SEPARATED.....	325	31
DIVORCED.....	42	4
WIDOWED.....	20	2
Total.....	1061	100
DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE		
YES.....	263	23
NO.....	870	77
Total.....	1133	100
DID YOU ATTEND UNIVERSITY		
YES.....	160	14
NO.....	982	86
Total.....	1142	100

Peel Participant Survey

Questions 22, 23 and 24	n	%
Highest level of education		
Primary school or less.....	10	8
Some high school.....	62	48
High school.....	31	24
Some college.....	8	6
Graduated college.....	13	10
Some university.....	2	2
Graduated university.....	2	2
Total.....	128	100
Last grade completed		
Grade 6.....	1	1
Grade 7.....	3	4
Grade 8.....	7	10
Grade 9.....	11	15
Grade 10.....	27	38
Grade 11.....	16	22
Grade 12.....	7	10
Total.....	72	100
Age of respondent		
16 - 23.....	37	29
24 - 30.....	48	38
31 - 35.....	18	14
36 - 45.....	19	15
Over 45.....	5	4
Total.....	127	100
Primary source of household income		
Job.....	45	37
Parents.....	17	14
Spouse.....	10	8
Savings.....	1	1
Income Assistance.....	43	35
Training allowance.....	3	2
UIC.....	1	1
Other.....	3	2
Total.....	123	100
Total household monthly income		
Up to \$ 500.....	6	6
Between \$ 501 and \$ 750.....	15	14
Between \$ 751 and \$ 1,000.....	33	31
Between \$ 1,001 and \$ 1,500.....	29	27
Between \$ 1,501 and \$ 2,000.....	7	6
Over \$ 2,000.....	18	17
Total.....	108	100

Peel Participant Survey

Question 15	n	%
Other areas		
Self confidence, self esteem.....	29	45
Discover and use own skills.....	8	13
Dealing with people, interaction skills.....	14	22
Handling stress.....	4	6
Job search, resume.....	5	8
Moral support.....	5	8
Other.....	14	22
Total.....	64	100
Marital Status		
Single.....	63	51
Married.....	2	2
Separated.....	44	35
Divorced.....	12	10
Widowed.....	3	2
Total.....	124	100
Number of children at home		
None.....	23	18
One.....	62	49
Two.....	30	24
Three.....	8	6
Four.....	3	2
Total.....	126	100
Age Of Children		
Under 3.....	36	37
3 - 5.....	42	43
6 - 9.....	30	31
10 - 14.....	28	29
15 - 17.....	6	6
18 or older.....	6	6
Total.....	98	100

APPENDIX III

LIST OF ES PROGRAM OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED

**APPENDIX III
LIST OF PEEL ES OFFICIALS INTERVIEWED**

MCSS

- John Haist, Program Supervisor, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Mississauga.

PEEL SOCIAL SERVICES STAFF

- Paul Vezina, Acting Commissioner of Social Services, Peel Region;
- Suzanne Mills, Acting Manager and ES North Office Coordinator;
- Teresa Culliton, Acting Supervisor, ES North Office (and Social Services Employment Program - SSEP - Coordinator);
- Frank Radi, ES South Office Supervisor;
- Paulette Daysant, Project 1000 Project Leader, North;
- Anne Waddell, Project 1000 Project Leader, South;
- Corrine Calvert, Employment Resource Service (ERS), Employment Specialist, North Office;
- Scott Smith, Employment Resource Service, Employment Specialist, South Office
- Carol Calvert, Youth Prospects (YP) Project Worker, South Office;
- Lisa Brewitt, Vocational Rehabilitation Job Placement Program, Rehabilitation Worker, South Office.

EXHIBIT 8: EVALUATION ISSUES, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES — CYCLEBREAK PROGRAM

EVALUATION ISSUES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
Impact / Effect Issues 1. Did the Project assist the participants to begin / maintain employment?	R1. How many participants found employment? R2. How long did they maintain employment?	• Number of participants who: - received placement; - continued employment 60 days after placement; - other measures. • Number of participants working six months after the program. • Number of jobs held by participants over six months. • Proportion of the six months following the program during which participants were employed. • % of six months spent working. • Length of employment in the six months following the program compared to six months before. • Proportion of participants finding work compared to similar group. • Time spent on social assistance by type of entrance.	• Interviews with Project staff. • Focus group. • Interviews of participants. • Survey of comparison group. • Survey of Participants. • Same as above. • Same as above. • Survey of participants. • Survey of comparison group.
	R3. Is there a change in employment patterns for successful participants? R4. Is the program success rate higher than a comparable group?		

EXHIBIT 8: EVALUATION ISSUES, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES — CYCLEBREAK PROGRAM

EVALUATION ISSUES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
2. Did the Project strengthen the participants' personal sense of employment readiness.	R5. What changes do participants report? R6. How many participants pursued other training / further academic upgrading? R7. Do participants as a result of the Project: - demonstrate an enhanced self-image; and - report a gain in support by adult peers for their own initiatives associated with self-improvement. R8. Do participants report any negative outcomes?	- Participants demonstrate willingness / ability to seek employment of further training, counselling, etc. - Number of participants who took other training / further academic training. - Show reductions in other barriers to employability. - Were participants better off financially after the program than before? Six months after the program?	- Survey of comparison group. - Survey of participants. - File review: - Nowicki / Strickland - CPI psychological data; Daily Timesheet - Interviews with past clients. - Survey of participants. - Focus group / Interviews with participants. - Survey of comparison group. - Interviews with staff.
3. Did the Project improve the participants' financial situation?			

cyclebreak

EXHIBIT 8: EVALUATION ISSUES, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES — CYCLEBREAK PROGRAM

EVALUATION ISSUES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
4. Did the Project end / reduce the participants' dependence on income assistance?	R9. Do participants report any change in income?	Participants are financially as well or better off than before Project participation.	Same as above.
	R10. How long were participants on some form of financial assistance prior to Project entry?	Participants become ineligible for welfare payments or levels of available welfare support are reduced, even if participants have not found employment.	- Aggregated data from MSS&H. - Focus group / interviews with participants.
	R11. How many participants continued to receive financial assistance after Project completion? - at what level; and - for how long?	- Participants are no longer receiving welfare payments, or are receiving reduced levels of support. - Fewer participants of the program compared to before are on social assistance. - Dependency was shifted to other income support programs, e.g. unemployment insurance benefits.	- Survey of the participants. - Survey of comparison group. - Interviews with project staff. - Interviews with MSS&H staff.
	R12. With what frequency did participants use the long-term support element of the Cyclebreak Project during the first year following completion?	Incidence and nature of long-term support provided to clients during the period under review.	- Surveys of participants. - File reviews. - Interviews with project staff. - Focus group with participants. - Interviews with participants.
5. What program interventions contribute most to creating employment?			

cyclebreak

EXHIBIT 8: EVALUATION ISSUES, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES — CYCLEBREAK PROGRAM

EVALUATION ISSUES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
	R13. What is the value of corporate mentors: • during the project? • for one year after the project? R14. What is the value of the job placement component? R15. What is the value of the job search training? R16. What is the value of the in-class training component of the project?	• Incidence and nature during and six months after project. • Purpose of mentor contacts. • Outcome (impacts) of these contacts. • Number of placements successful vs. unsuccessful. • Longer term employment rate of successful vs. unsuccessful. • Number of individuals who obtained jobs: - immediately following - six months after • Frequency of job seeking activities during equal periods before / after the program. • Individuals attribute improvement in skills from in-class component.	• Interviews with staff. • Interviews / focus group with participants. • Participant questionnaire. • Focus group with placements. • Interviews with participants. • Review of project files. • Survey of participants. • Focus group of participants. • Interviews with project personnel. • Project files. • Same as above.

cyd/akc

EXHIBIT 8: EVALUATION ISSUES, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES — CYCLEBREAK PROGRAM

EVALUATION ISSUES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
6. What are the costs of Cyclebreak compared to social assistance?	R17. What is the value of other components of the program? R18. What is the total incremental cost per participant of Cyclebreak? R19. What are the total social assistance savings per participant from the program? R20. What portion of project costs are allocated to B. Tully and Co. Associates profit? R21. What are the per diem cost by comparable elements for other employability programs?	• Same as above. • Per diem costs. • Per participant costs (registered and completed). • Change in social assistance payments to participants. • Profit element of per diem costs. • Per diem costs of not-for-profit projects.	• Same as above. • Program financial records. • Interviews of program officials. • Aggregated data from MSS&H. • Interviews with MSS&H. • Participant questionnaire. (If aggregate data not available.) • Project financial records. • Financial records of similar projects. • Interviews with officials of other projects.

EXHIBIT 8: EVALUATION ISSUES, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES — CYCLEBREAK PROGRAM

EVALUATION ISSUES	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	DATA SOURCES
7. How does the "for profit" objective of the delivery agency influence the effectiveness of the project? Extra Issue	R22. What specific features of the project reflect the profit nature of the delivery organization? R23. How do the above features impact on the effectiveness of the project?	- Evidence of features of the project which exist because of the for profit nature of B. Tully and Associates versus those which are not possible in a not-for-profit delivery organization. - Relationship of above features to project processes and outcomes.	- Project environment analysis of B. Tully and a not-for-profit delivery environment. - An analysis of features, processes and outcomes.